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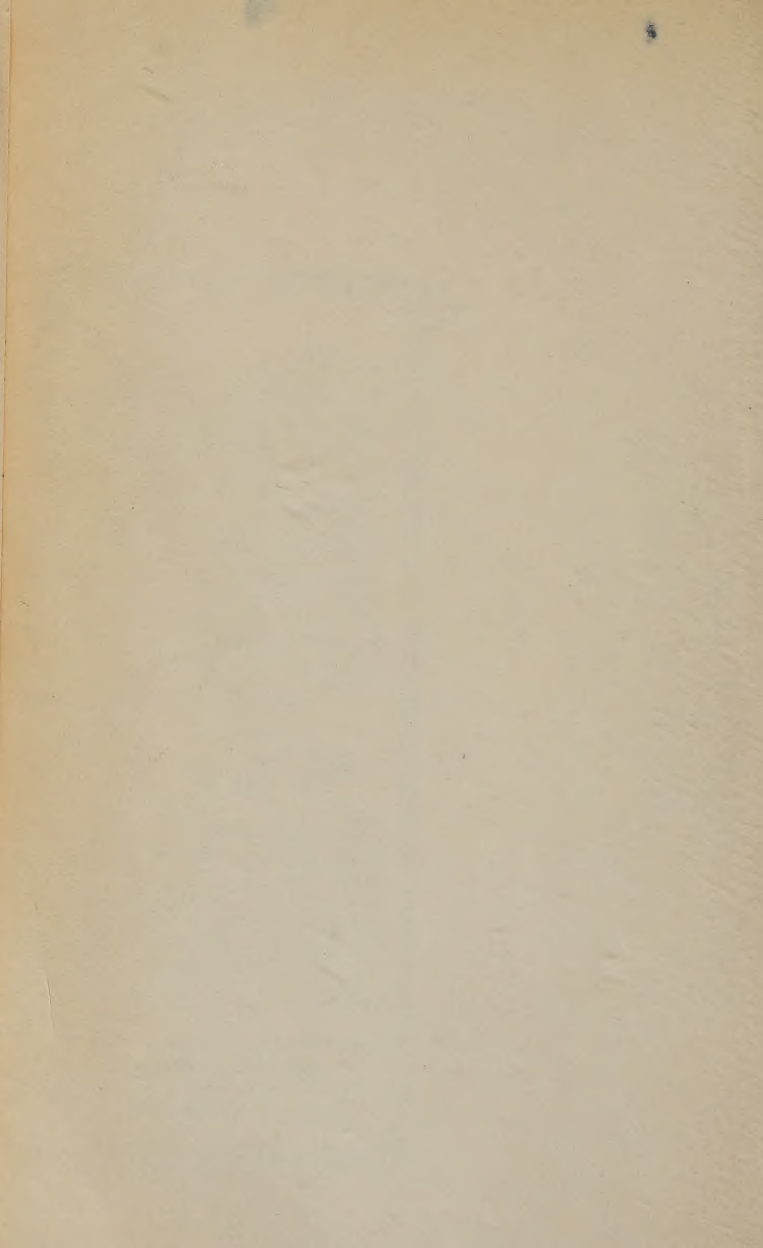
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THE ELEMENTS OF  
BOOK-COLLECTING







# THE ELEMENTS OF BOOK-COLLECTING

BY

IOLO A. WILLIAMS

Author of

*By-ways Round Helicon ;*

*Seven 18th Century Bibliographies ; Shorter Poems  
of the 18th Century ;*

Etc.

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## NOTE

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My very best thanks are due to Mr. R. W. Chapman, who has read through one set of my proofs, and has thereby saved me from making several mistakes. For any that remain I am, of course, solely responsible, as I am also for the various opinions expressed in this book. It would be a poor return on my part were I to saddle him with any responsibility for my views, with some of which he may not agree ; yet his kindness must not go without acknowledgment.

I. A. W.



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# THE ELEMENTS OF BOOK-COLLECTING

## CHAPTER I

### THE PLEASURES AND LOGIC OF BOOK-COLLECTING

THERE is, I have come to believe, pleasure to be obtained from collecting almost any class of things—though, personally, I have never quite grasped the attractions of bus-tickets or of the numbers of railway engines. That, however, is probably because I have failed to understand what is to be learnt from bus-tickets or from the accumulation of engine numbers in a notebook ; for, to my mind, the object of all collecting is the increase of the general sum of knowledge upon some particular subject—a thesis which will be developed a little more fully later on in this volume.

For the present it is enough to opine that, of all things that are agreeable to collect, among the most agreeable are printed books. They are records of the human soul and brain ; of man's conquests over knowledge, or of his mastery over the understanding of his own emotions—which latter class we call, for some obscure reason, verse or prose fiction. What more engrossing occupation can one imagine than the collecting and arrangement of a group of such



records, all bearing upon some one aspect of human knowledge or development? And how much is the pleasure of this occupation increased, if the central matter, or theme, round which the collection is grouped, is one that is obscure, from lack of previous study, or from some caprice of fashion! There is much honourable work to be done still in the study of—for example—those periods of English poetry that have most generally been accepted as the greatest; but the student of such a period can seldom know the pleasure of making a discovery of major importance within his own sphere of activity, and the collector of English poetry of the greatest periods (I use the phrase for convenience and “without prejudice”) has his field of search strictly limited. Most of the surviving copies of the books of the Elizabethan age, for example, are either in public libraries (whence they will never issue again into the book market), or they are in big private collections which are only comparatively rarely broken up and sold; or they are in the shops of a dozen or so of the great booksellers of the world. Moreover, they are not to be collected by discrimination alone, but only with the assistance of considerable sums of money. Therefore, for the collector whose appetite is with difficulty satiated, who is eager to be adding continually to his collection and to his knowledge of his subject, they have disadvantages—though those disadvantages are not, of course, insuperable by the right collector with the right knowledge and the right purse.

The collector, however, who finds for himself some unexplored field of literature has a far wider scope

for the pursuit of his bibliographical quarry. He may search hopefully in those delightful shops where all is chaos (save sometimes in the mind of the proprietor) and books lie in great heaps upon the floor, and he may rout out his treasures amid clouds of dust and the scuttlings of disturbed black-beetles. He may climb step-ladders, and search topmost shelves with a good heart. He may buy bundles at an auction and find in them half a dozen volumes that he will value. He may have all the joys of a pioneer, finding out for himself what are the good books in his own field of research, and what the bad ones, and he has all the time the satisfaction of knowing that each bit of real gold that he discovers is so much treasure brought to light from oblivion, not for his own use only, but for the enjoyment of countless other persons. Such a collector may, moreover, even if he is a poor man, buy his books at prices low enough to allow him to form a really fine library, valuable in the scholarly sense of the word, within a comparatively short time. Let me take a concrete instance, and recall—I trust without undue egotism—how I began, some fifteen or sixteen years ago, to collect the minor poets of the eighteenth century. When I began, and, indeed, for several years after the end of the war, it was almost impossible for me to go into a bookshop, either in London or in a country town, without finding anything up to a dozen forgotten volumes of verse which appeared to be at least worth taking home and examining more carefully at leisure; and, of these, many did not cost me more than sixpence or a shilling apiece, while the vast majority were bought at less than five shillings each. I was

able, therefore, without spending much more than I could properly afford (a keen collector always, of course, spends just a little more than he ought on his collection) to make myself a library of eighteenth century poetry which has been an endless source of pleasure to me, and by which (with the aid, of course, of some museum reading) I have been able to compile two anthologies that have, I hope, found new readers for several very pretty poets who had long been almost readerless.

The joy that I have had in forming, and using, my collection is a joy that many other collectors have had, and may yet have. Not, perhaps, in collecting quite the same books that I collected, for I find, when I revisit the bookshops whence once I issued with an armful of volumes, that there is little or no eighteenth century poetry there for me to buy ; when now I add a book to my shelves, it comes usually from one of the great bookshops where—quite rightly—I have to pay a price commensurate with the trouble which a great bookseller expends upon cataloguing and arrangement. Yet there are other fields in plenty for the collector to explore. For instance, there are the minor contemporaries of Keats and Shelley, Wordsworth and Byron, among whom there must surely be many poets worthy of much more attention than they have yet received. Yet, so far as I know, no one is at present collecting the books of the early nineteenth century minor poets.

The book-collector is the object of many gibes. It is often said, for instance, that he cannot read the books he buys, but amasses them, as a seaside landlady does knick-knacks, without understanding and

for no reasoned purpose. Yet no true book-collector will buy a book that he does not either wish to read immediately, or feel that he may, some day, have need to consult—unless, of course, he is interested not in the verbal contents of books, but in their binding, illustration or printing, all three perfectly legitimate subjects of study. The only proper exception, that I can imagine, to the rule that a collector should only buy books that he wishes, or may wish, to study, is in the case of the man who is collecting not for himself, but in order to endow some public institution with his library ; and against him, even if a trifle of vanity is sometimes to be discerned in his composition, I conceive that the public should bear no grudge.

Another accusation often brought against the book-collector is that he worships blindly the first edition. This accusation is based on so specious and so widely spread a fallacy—that the first edition is a thing in itself of no real value—that it is worth our while to consider somewhat carefully the whole question of first editions and their value or lack of value.

Books, I have said, are the written records of the progress of man's knowledge and wisdom ; and to appraise the importance of any particular record, that is to say of any particular printed volume, it is necessary to consider it as a court of law considers evidence. Now in a court of law only first-hand evidence is accepted, and a first edition corresponds almost exactly to first-hand evidence. It is—apart from the manuscript, which usually no longer exists—the author's first and personal statement of his

thoughts on some subject, and all other editions must be either corrected statements of those thoughts (these are editions which are revised by the author himself) or mere hearsay (meaning by that editions which are only unrevised reprints). It is obvious that neither of these kinds of edition can have as great an importance for students as the edition in which the author first gave his evidence—and for this reason, that no study of a writer's work can be thorough if that study does not begin with the first editions of his books. Therefore, so long as a writer's work has any significance for mankind, and has students to study it, access to the first editions will be a thing of importance, and those first editions will have—in the truest sense of the phrase—a unique value.

An editor of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, for instance, must, if he is to do his job thoroughly, first study the first edition, then compare with it the later editions, noting differences of text, and deciding which differences he will adopt in his edition and which he will reject ; for it must be remembered that each time a piece of writing is reproduced it is liable to two kinds of change—by deliberate correction and by the intrusion of fresh errors of printing or transcription.

Further than this, a first edition has not only a real and logical importance, but a sentimental value also. Some folk, I know, are unable to feel this sentiment, and they, because of that inability, can never taste to the full the pleasures of book-collecting. But for my part, though I admit that the sentimental is less than the real importance of a first edition, I rejoice



in its appeal. Is it not something added to one's pleasure in reading a favourite book to feel that the copy one is handling is exactly similar to that which the author himself saw—with all the pride of parenthood—upon the morning of first publication? It may—who knows?—be the very copy which he himself gloated over, and handed over the breakfast table to his wife with a “Well, my dear, how do you think it looks?” It may even be the very copy that a certain playwright tucked under his arm to carry, by the footpath across the meadows, as a gift to Anne Hathaway. A first edition has, for me, something about it which sets the imagination on fire, and brings me into closer contact with the author's mind. And why not? After all, an author, since the invention of printing, has generally thought of a book, even while he was writing it, as something which was to appear in a printed form. He has, at least to some extent, considered his sentences and his paragraphs from the point of view of their appearance on the printed page. He may himself have chosen the type, paper, binding, of his book, in which case the actual first edition is obviously more truly his work than any posthumous reprint can possibly be. And, even where this was not so, he has at least had in mind, as he wrote, contemporary fashions and customs in book production; he has known what a book, of the kind he was writing, would, at that date, probably look like in print. So that we come back again to the fact—and it is a fact—that a first edition is a valuable asset to anyone who wishes to study an author's mind or style.

From this point in the argument it is possible to

discern what factors make for the comparative monetary values of the first editions of various books. Since, as I trust I have demonstrated, a first edition is in itself a thing of importance to students, the value of a particular first edition will depend upon, first, the importance of the book itself, whether as literature or as a record of fact ; second, the number of people who wish to study it ; and third, the number of copies that exist. In other words, the price of a book depends upon supply and demand, but, while the demand may vary from time to time, the available supply of any first edition (except in the twenty years or so immediately after publication) never varies—except, indeed, slowly, but surely, to diminish.

These, then, are the three factors which decide how much a collector will have to pay for a given first edition. How important is the book ? How many people want it ? How many copies are in existence ? Let us consider in a little more detail how these things act one upon another. Clearly, the maximum value will be reached by a book of the very first importance, which every library in the world would like to possess, and of which only one copy exists ; and, as evidently, the value will be diminished if any one of the three conditions is altered. If the book is of no importance no one will want to possess it, and it will have—though unique—no value ; and this gives us a clue to the fact that the most powerful of our three factors is the merit of the book itself, and that a moderately rare first edition of one of the greatest books will usually be worth more than a unique copy of a minor work. Indeed, the two



most valuable books in the world, the Mazarin Bible and the first folio Shakespeare, are a long way from being in the first rank as rarities, but they are moderately rare, and this, combined with their wonderful historical and literary interest, gives them their places as the greatest of all book-collectors' treasures. If either of these books were unique, it would, of course, be even more valuable than it is ; but, as a matter of fact, it is extremely unlikely that a book of the very first literary or historical importance should ever become unique—for that assumes that at some period in its history it has been so little thought of that every copy except one has been destroyed. This has been the fate of many good books, and of a still larger number of lesser works by great authors ; but I doubt if it has ever happened to any of what might be called the primary literary masterpieces of the world.

It is when one comes to the secondary masterpieces that considerations of rarity, and fashions in taste, come most fully into play. It is fairly easy to say what classes of books are most likely to become rarest. They are books intended for the use of children, which are usually pulled to pieces by their readers ; books—such as almanacs—that are ephemeral in intention ; pamphlets ; books by writers temporarily or permanently obscure ; anonymous books ; and any other kind of book that is not much regarded at the time of its publication ; further, it must be added that the smaller a book is the more likely it is to become rare—though some large books were driven a good distance towards rarity by being sold to paper mills during the period of the Great War.

Now books from any of these classes may become the keenly-sought quarry of the collector. The obscure writer may have achieved distinction later in his career ; the child's book may have been recognised, after many years of nursery popularity, as a classic in its own kind ; the anonymous tract may be proved to be from the hand of a master. But none of them—unless, indeed, it be some little book of verse—is likely to be a gem of the very first water, such as would make the chief treasure of a great library. It is on the price of these books, therefore, that fluctuations of taste, the varying popularity of a particular author or illustrator with its consequent increase or decrease in the number of people wishing to buy his first editions, have the greatest effect. And it is precisely for that reason that such kinds of books offer the most hopeful collecting-ground to the man or woman who has not unlimited money to spend on forming a collection.

I have tried in the last few paragraphs to describe some of the general reasons for the importance of first editions, and for the value of certain types of them. The mere fact that into those paragraphs the word “fashion” has several times crept, is enough to show that all is not orderly, sane and logical even in the world of book collecting. Particular authors, particular kinds of authors, may have their books skied by fashion to ridiculously high prices, and may see those prices fall again. Further—and worse—than this, there are vulgarians who collect books for their own glorification, there are even some who will not buy a book at all unless it is expensive. If I were writing upon the follies of

book collecting, instead of upon its pleasures and logic, I could find plenty of fools to belabour or poke fun at ; but here is not the place, and let me leave them with merely a passing reference to show that their presence is not unperceived.

In spite of folly, vulgarity and extravagance, the collecting of books is a pursuit for sane people. Its heart is sound, and its very blood is the record of man's achievement in the conquest of knowledge. The book collector's duty is to see that his recreation—if it is merely that—is a step further in the progress of that conquest. He must make his collection of books a marshalling of the evidence which exists in some corner—however small and dark—of the hall of written knowledge. He will then find that his pursuit is a profitable and useful one. He will also find it extremely pleasant.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SIZES OF BOOKS

PERHAPS, to be strictly logical, I ought to preface this chapter with a definition of what is meant by the word "book." This, however, I do not propose to do. Was it not Dr. Johnson who said that, though he could not define an elephant, he knew one very well when he saw it? Every collector will know what he himself means by a book, and if all collectors do not adopt what might be called co-terminal definitions, if one, for instance, includes single-sheet broadsides and another excludes them, it does not much matter for our present purpose. This much must, however, be said, not so much by way of exact definition, as to make clear the subject matter of the present chapter: books are of two main kinds, manuscript and printed. Manuscripts are also, in their turn, divisible into two classes, those written with a view to being circulated, and generally read, in manuscript, and those which are merely the author's means of recording his thoughts and of conveying them to the printer. Each kind of manuscript has its special kinds of merit: the first is valued chiefly for beauties of caligraphy and of decoration; the second, chiefly for the eminence of its writer or the importance of its matter, for, as an evidence of the author's intentions, it obviously antedates, and is more valuable than, even the first printed edition. But our concern is not now with

the manuscript book. What we are about to consider is the form of the printed book.

Books are printed occasionally on vellum, rarely on linen or other cloth, and most commonly on sheets of paper of various sizes, which are folded in various ways.

A sheet of paper folded so as to be part of a book forms a number of leaves, each of which has—naturally—two sides, which are called pages. People often speak loosely of tearing a “page” out of a book, when what they really mean is tearing a “leaf” out of it; but bibliographers (those, that is, who write about books as books) always keep the terms “leaf” and “page” to their proper uses. Printed page-numbers were first used in 1472 by the Hoernen of Cologne, and pages are usually numbered consecutively in one series, or in a convenient limited number of series, throughout a book, so that they may be referred to by their numbers. The two pages of a particular leaf are, however, distinguished also by the use of the words “recto” and “verso.” The meaning of these words may be made clear in this way. Hold this book, which you are now reading (as I trust), open and the right way up in front of you. Take any leaf and hold it erect between your finger and thumb. The recto is the side of the leaf which faces to your left, and the verso that which faces to your right. How the different sheets and leaves which make up a book are described and referred to shall be dealt with later in this chapter. We must first consider the ways in which a sheet of paper is folded in order that it may conveniently form part of a book.

Paper which is intended for printing is made in various sizes, but it is always a rectangle, and is longer one way than the other. The simplest method of folding such a sheet of paper is to do so once across the centre of its width, thus making it into two leaves, or four pages. A book made up of sheets so folded is called a folio ; and the two leaves of a sheet folded in folio are only joined the one to the other at the back, so that a folio never needs to be opened with a paper-knife.

Now, if this sheet of paper be taken once more (the reader will follow me most easily if he takes a sheet of foolscap paper and folds it himself as directed) and folded across the centre of the width of the leaves it will be seen that it forms four leaves, or eight pages. A book made up of sheets so folded is called a quarto (often abbreviated to 4to) ; and a sheet folded in quarto has the first leaf joined to the second at the top and the third joined similarly to the fourth, so that a quarto, in order to be read, has to have all its leaves opened at the top with a paper-knife.

Repeat once more the process of folding the leaves across the centre of their width and the sheet will now form eight leaves, or sixteen pages. A book made up of leaves so folded is called an octavo (8vo) ; and a sheet folded in octavo has the leaves joined together as follows :—

The	1st	leaf is joined to the	4th	at the top.
„	2nd	„ „ „	3rd	„ „
„	5th	„ „ „	8th	„ „
„	6th	„ „ „	7th	„ „
„	5th	„ „ „	6th	at the outside (“ fore ”) edge.
„	7th	„ „ „	8th	„ „ „ „



An octavo, therefore, has to be opened with a paper-knife in all these places. The outside edges (or "fore-edges" as they are technically known) of the first four leaves and the bottom edges of all eight leaves are the only edges that are originally free in an octavo. As far as the joining of leaves at their back is concerned, the arrangement in every folding is the same; that is to say that the two outside leaves of a folding are united at the back, the second leaf is joined to the last but one, and so on.

Now take the sheet, already folded in octavo, and once more fold it across the centre of the width of the leaves, and the result will be that the sheet gives us sixteen leaves or thirty-two pages. A book made up of sheets so folded is called a sextodecimo (16mo), and this is the smallest folding commonly used, though others (32mo, etc.) do exist. In a 16mo the leaves are joined together as follows:—

The	1st	leaf is joined to the	8th	at the top.
"	2nd	"	"	"
"	3rd	"	"	"
"	4th	"	"	"
"	9th	"	"	"
"	10th	"	"	"
"	11th	"	"	"
"	12th	"	"	"
"	1st	"	"	2nd at the bottom.
"	3rd	"	"	"
"	13th	"	"	"
"	15th	"	"	"
"	9th	"	"	12th at the fore-edge.
"	10th	"	"	"
"	13th	"	"	"
"	14th	"	"	"



It will be seen, therefore, that a 16mo has to have its leaves opened with a paper-knife in all these places.

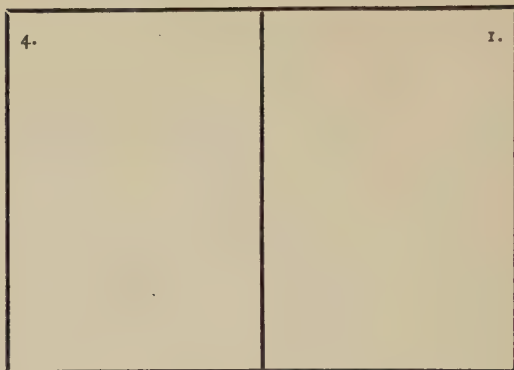
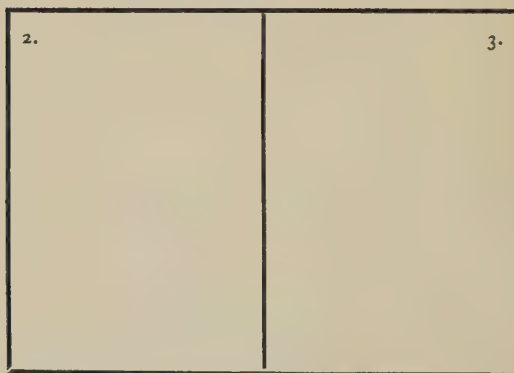
There is, however, another very common folding, which results in a form intermediate between the octavo and the 16mo, the duodecimo (12mo), where the sheet is folded into twelve leaves or twenty-four pages. Evidently there are two methods<sup>1</sup> by which this result can be achieved. The sheet can be folded first into three, then into two, and then again into two ; or it can be folded first into two, then into three, and then into two. The first method divides the breadth of the sheet into four, and therefore gives leaves that are narrower in proportion to their height than does the second method, in which it is the length of the sheet that is folded into four. Each of these methods has been specially favoured at certain periods. In the seventeenth century, for instance, duodecimos were usually made by the three-two-two folding ; whereas in later duodecimos the two-three-three folding has most often been used. The third sequence of folds, two-two-three, would result in some of the free edges of the leaves coming into the centre of the book, and would therefore be unsuitable for binding ; in each of the two possible sequences, however, a variation may be introduced, for the two outer parts of the fold into three may be arranged so that either of them is on top of the other.

<sup>1</sup> There was yet a third way of making a duodecimo book. This consisted of printing the sheet with twelve pages on each side but—instead of folding it whole into twelve leaves—cutting it into two parts, one part to make eight leaves and the other four. This method was often used in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. See Mr. R. W. Chapman's article in *The Library*, Vol. IV., New Series, pp. 165—180.

Therefore, to enumerate the various ways in which the leaves of a duodecimo may be joined would take up more space than it seems justifiable to allow. The reader, should he need this information, can always fold a piece of paper and work out the problem for himself. Some people may even think that I have already given too much space to the details of the joining of leaves in quartos, octavos and 16mos. I have done it, however, for this reason, that it is often difficult to be sure from a casual inspection of a book how the paper is folded, and if one can detect how the leaves were originally joined there can be no confusion—for example—between a 16mo and two octavo sections slipped the one within the other. Cutting down of the margins of the pages, of course, destroys this kind of evidence, but mere opening of the leaves does not do so, for tell-tale irregularities left by the paper-knife will usually reveal to an observant eye which two leaves were united the one to the other.

When trying to solve a bibliographical problem it is sometimes helpful to realise which pages on a sheet come on which side of that sheet, since it is clear that each side has had to be printed separately. I shall therefore here give diagrams of the two sides of a sheet of the three commonest foldings—folio, quarto, and octavo—showing the relative positions of the different pages on each side. It will be convenient for the collector to have such diagrams handy, and he can easily make similar diagrams of 12mo or 16mo foldings for himself if he needs them.

## FOLIO.

*Side printed from Outer Forme.<sup>1</sup>**Side printed from Inner Forme.*

<sup>1</sup> The frame in which is fixed the type of all the pages to be printed on one side of a sheet is called a "forme." An "Outer Forme" is that which bears the type of that side of the sheet which will, when the sheet is folded, be on the outside (*i.e.*, the side on which are printed the first and last pages of the sheet). The "Inner Forme" is the frame bearing the type of the pages on the other side of the sheet.

# QUARTO.

*Side printed from Outer Forme.*

5.	4.
8.	1.

*Side printed from Inner Forme.*

3.	9.
2.	7.

OCTAVO.<sup>1</sup>*Side printed from Outer Forme.*

·5	·21	·6	·8
4.	13.	16.	1.

*Side printed from Inner Forme.*

·2	·01	·11	·9
2.	15.	14.	3.

<sup>1</sup> These diagrams are made on the assumption (which is, I hope, justified) that a sheet is always folded in octavo, so as to cause the last two pairs of leaves to be joined at the fore-edge. I do not think the folding was ever so made as to cause the first two pairs to be thus joined.

In the case of each type of folding the first side shown is that on which the first page occurs, and the sheet is so placed that this page appears right side up. The reverse side is shown in the position it would be in if you picked up the sheet (as displayed in the first diagram of each pair) by the right edge and turned it over to the left. The page numbers in the diagrams are in every instance shown as they would appear if actually printed on the outside top corner of each page.

If a sheet of any old make of paper (and of many modern makes also) be held up to the light it will be seen that along its length run many parallel, slightly transparent, lines. These are called "wire marks," and are caused by a slight thinning of the pulp (of which the paper is made) over the wires which form the bottom of the papermaker's mould. Similarly, other semi-transparent lines run at intervals of about an inch across the width of the sheet. These are caused by other wires—"chain wires"—in the mould, and are called "chain-marks." These chain-marks are of great assistance to the bibliographer in his endeavours to decide whether any particular book is a folio, quarto, octavo, or whatever it may be. The first lesson in bibliography that I ever received was from the late Charles Sayle, of the Cambridge University Library, and he then taught me the following facts about chain-marks :—

- In a folio the chain-marks run up and down the leaf.
- In an octavo the chain-marks run up and down the leaf.
- In a quarto the chain-marks run across the leaf.
- In a duodecimo the chain-marks may go either way.
- In a 16mo the chain-marks run across the leaf.

That is one of the best of all guides to the ascertainment of the folding (which is often loosely, but conveniently, called the "size") of a book. There is, however, another equally important guide.

As, because it is important for pages to be readily distinguishable the one from another, they are marked each in a distinctive way by means of consecutive numbers, so, in order that the sheets of a book may be readily distinguished and arranged in proper order by the binder, they also are usually marked. This is done by "signatures," which generally take the form of letters of the alphabet, but are also sometimes (in modern books) numbers, and printed signatures were first used by Johann Koelhoff at Cologne in 1472. The signature occurs at the foot of the first page of every sheet. Often the signature is only printed this once on each sheet, but often, also, it is repeated on the recto of a varying number of subsequent leaves of the sheet, though it is never, I think, put on more than one over half the total number. In an octavo, for example, the signature may appear on the first leaf, or on the first two, three, four or five leaves, of each sheet. On the first leaf the signature may be printed either as a simple letter, *e.g.*, A, or as a letter with the number 1 following it, *e.g.*, A1. When subsequent leaves are signed it is with a letter and a numeral, *e.g.*, A2, A3 or A4. The numeral of course indicates whether the leaf is the first or second, and so on, of its sheet ; and any leaf of a book can be exactly referred to by this method. There can never be any doubt as to what leaf of a book is meant by L3 or P7 or T15. Since there is not an inexhaustible number of letters in the



alphabet it often happens that its end is reached before all the sheets of a book are signed. In this event the series is continued by recommencing with Aa<sup>1</sup>, and, if necessary, with Aaa when the alphabet is exhausted more than twice. Normally, in the signatures of books the letters I or J, U or V, and W are omitted, thus reducing the alphabet by three letters.

The preliminary section of a book (which is frequently set up in type after the main text) is often signed with an asterisk or other conventional sign ; often, too, it is not signed at all. When sheets are signed not with letters but with numerals, the first leaf of each sheet is frequently the only one to be signed.

These signatures give us the easiest method of ascertaining the size of a book, as they provide us with an indication of where each sheet begins, so that there is no difficulty in discovering into how many leaves it is folded. There is, however, this warning to be given—that the signatures refer to a “gather-ing” of leaves which is not necessarily the same as a sheet—though it is usually so. It was not uncommon, however, in certain periods for the sheet to be cut in two before printing and folding. Most plays of the middle of the eighteenth century, for example, were published in what is called “octavo in half-sheets,” and each signature of such a book consists of four leaves only—which might lead the unwary to describe it as a quarto. On the other hand, some modern novels have signatures which apply to two sheets of eight leaves each, one sheet being slipped, after folding, inside the other. A book of this kind

<sup>1</sup> Or with 2A, 3A, etc.

is not a 16mo, but an octavo, in spite of the fact that it has sixteen leaves to each signature. Again, very early folios were often bound up in gatherings of ten leaves (five sheets) to one signature ; and in Elizabethan times folios frequently were bound in sixes—that is to say with three sheets to each signature.

Properly speaking, the terms folio, quarto, octavo and the rest describe only the number of leaves into which each sheet of a book is folded ; but since, at all periods, books of each type of folding have tended to be *approximately* of one shape and set of dimensions, the words have long been used loosely, and, *in the modern book trade*, are now used solely, to indicate the measurements of the leaves of the book. When a modern bookseller (a seller of current editions, that is, not of old or rare second-hand books) describes a volume as a folio he intends to convey to the purchaser only that the leaves of the book are approximately of the dimensions of those of, for instance, such a periodical as *Country Life* or the *Sphere*. When he calls a book a quarto he means that its leaves are approximately like those of *Punch*. When he speaks of an octavo he means a book with leaves like those of an ordinary seven-and-sixpenny novel or of the “A.B.C.” railway guide. This use of words is, however, never employed in any strictly bibliographical work.

Since, however, not all sheets of paper are originally the same size, it clearly follows that not all octavos (for instance) have the same leaf measurements. Gradually the custom has grown up of qualifying the description of a book as octavo, etc., by the prefixing such adjectives as “pott,” “crown,”

“demy,” “post,” etc. Historically, some of these words are derived from the watermarks used by various makes of paper ; but now they indicate not makes but sizes, and these sizes are, in the modern trade, fixed within a comparatively small margin of variation. It will be useful here to record in a table the approximate measurements of some of the different sheets.

A sheet of pott	measures about	$15\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$	ins.
“ foolscap	“ “	$15-17 \times 12-13\frac{1}{2}$	“
“ post	“ “	$19\frac{1}{2} \times 15\frac{1}{2}$	“
“ crown	“ “	$20 \times 15$	“
“ double-crown	“ “	$30 \times 20$	“
“ demy	“ “	$22\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$	“
“ royal	“ “	$25 \times 20$	“
“ imperial	“ “	$30 \times 22$	“
“ elephant	“ “	$28 \times 23$	“

It must be remembered that there may be a variation of as much as two inches in either dimension of any of these sheets ; nevertheless, this table will enable the reader to know fairly accurately what to expect, in the matter of leaf-measurement, of a book described as a post-octavo, royal-quarto, or what not.

Another guide to the way in which the sheets of a book are folded lies in the watermark. Watermarks are made in paper in the same way as chain-marks. That is to say, they are caused by the wires of the paper-maker’s mould being so arranged as to cause the paper to be slightly thinner—and therefore more transparent—in certain places than others. Watermarks are usually in the form of patterns, words, or dates.

Rules are sometimes given by which, from the position of the watermark, the folding of the paper can be determined. These rules, however, depend on the assumption that the watermark was always placed in the same position on the sheet of paper. But this is an assumption which it is not safe to make. Let me take an example : I am writing this paragraph in the library of my club ; I take down an encyclopædia and read that in a folio one of every pair of leaves should have a watermark and that in a quarto “ some pairs of leaves will have no watermark, in others it will be found divided by the fold.” However, the very first quarto I examine, Tenhove’s *Memoirs of the House of Medici*, printed at Bath in 1797, does not obey this rule. This book shows a watermark towards the outer edge of each leaf of a gathering (or at least of such of its gatherings as I have examined). It is clear, therefore, that, though it may be possible to lay down definite rules as to the position of the watermark in various foldings at a particular period, it would only be misleading (because exceptions would not infrequently occur) to do so in a general book of elements such as this one. Watermarks are, nevertheless, a very valuable guide ; but the only safe *general* rule to give is this : that the student should examine the watermark of the particular book he is studying, should try to make out what it was, and where it was placed on the sheet, and should try to draw from it what evidence as to the folding of the particular book under examination it affords him, but should not assume that what holds good of one book will do so of another. It must also be said that the examina-

tion of watermarks, in books of octavo or smaller folding, is not always an easy matter—especially when the book has been much trimmed by the binder, and a large part of the watermark thus cut away.

Perhaps, however, I have been unduly cautious in the last paragraph, for it must be admitted that, to the vast majority of books printed before about 1790, the rules, as ordinarily given, do apply. These rules tell one that the watermark was usually so placed that, when a sheet is folded in folio, the watermark lies at about the centre of one of the two leaves. When the sheet is folded in quarto, the watermark is to be found at the middle of the back-fold of one of the two pairs of leaves, half appearing on one leaf of the pair and half on the other. When a sheet is folded in octavo, the watermark will be found divided between the top inner corners of either leaves 1, 4, 5 and 8, or 2, 3, 6 and 7, of the sheet. For other foldings the student can easily, by folding a sheet of paper on which he has drawn a figure representing a watermark, work out for himself its position. Often the maker's initials were also watermarked on the paper, in such a position that in the folio folding they face the main watermark. Not only are watermarks of great assistance in helping one to determine the folding of a book, but an irregularity in the incidence of the watermark will often enable one to detect the presence of a cancel-leaf (see p. 53, *post*).

## CHAPTER III

### THE PARTS OF A BOOK

IN the last chapter we considered the manner in which a sheet of paper is folded and otherwise treated so as conveniently to form part of a printed book. It is now necessary to deal with the various parts of the book into which those sheets may be made, leaving out of account for the moment the binding or other form of protective covering in which a book is usually kept.

The vast majority of printed books have at, or near, their beginning a title-page. That is to say that the recto of an early leaf of most books is devoted entirely to giving the reader particulars about the book he is about to read. On the title-page of an English book is usually set out, first of all, the title of the work, followed, often, by one or more alternative titles or descriptive sentences. Then may come the name of the author, the name, perhaps, of an editor, or contributor of a preface, introduction or the like, and sometimes a quotation or other motto. After this usually comes the name of the publisher or printer, or of both, the place of publication, and the date. Sometimes, also, the price of the book is printed on the title-page, though this is not at all a general custom. A title-page may have on it woodcut or other ornaments ; it may be set up in type, it may be engraved, or it may have



had both processes employed in its making. The forms of the title-page are endless ; suffice it to say that nearly all books have some form or other of title-page, and that the essence of a title-page is that it is purely a page of preliminary announcement, bearing upon it no part of the author's main text.

There are, however, exceptions to the universality of the title-page. A single printed leaf, issued by itself, obviously will have no title-page, but only a heading at the top. A small pamphlet, also, sometimes begins with only a heading above the beginning of the text. But these exceptions are unimportant in comparison with the one now to be mentioned, which is that of the earliest printed books. When books first began to be printed it was not the custom to employ a title-page. The first book printed with movable types on the continent of Europe was the Latin Bible, of which the printing was completed at Mainz in 1455 by Fust and Schoeffer ; but it was not until 1470 that the title-page was employed (at least in any book bearing a date) on the continent. The first book printed in England—or at any rate, the first dated book printed here—was Caxton's *Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophers*, which was finished in November, 1477 ; but it was not until 1490 that a title-page appeared in an English book. In the earliest printed books the title-page's functions were performed by the colophon, a word which is a transliteration of the Greek *κολοφών*, a summit or finishing stroke. The colophon is put, not near the beginning of a book, like the title-page, but at the end, and it usually takes the form of a statement that here ends such-and-such a book, written by so-and-



so, printed by so-and-so at such-and-such a place and date. The use of the colophon has been revived in certain finely-printed modern books, but such modern volumes usually contain both a title-page and a colophon. As I write there lies before me an example of a book with a colophon as well as a title-page, printed only a few weeks ago. In this book the colophon reads thus :—

“This book was printed at the Golden Cockerel Press, Waltham Saint Lawrence, in Berkshire, and completed on the 30th day of July, 1926. Compositors : F. YOUNG and A. H. GIBBS. Pressman : H. C. COOPER. The edition is limited to 550 copies, of which this is No. 143.”

The last figure, naturally, is written in ink, and it is to be noticed that the name of the book is not mentioned, since this colophon does not replace the title-page, but merely supplements it. To compare with this an example of a fifteenth-century colophon may also be given. That of the first dated book, the Psalter printed by Fust and Schoeffer in 1457, runs as follows :—

“Presens spalmorum” [misprint for psalmorum] “codex venustate capitalium decoratus Rubricationibusque sufficienter distinctus, Adinuentione artificiosa imprimendi ac caracterizandi absque calami ulla exaracione sic effigiatus, Et ad eusebiam dei industrie est consummatus, Per Iohannem fust civem maguntinum, Et Petrum Schoffer de Gurnszheim Anno domini Millesimo. cccc. lvii In vigilia Assumpcionis.”

In the vast majority of books, however, as I have already said, a title-page is employed, and the collector should regard with suspicion any volume which is without one. The title-page is, nevertheless, not by any means always on the first leaf of the

book, for in a very large number of cases it is preceded by a half-title—that is to say by a leaf having printed on its recto, usually at about the centre of it, the title, or a shortened version of it, and occasionally also the author's name. Often there are printer's ornaments on the half-title, and in certain kinds of books the price is frequently also printed there. Occasionally such a statement as "entered at Stationers' Hall" may be added. The half-title began to be used about the end of the seventeenth century, but in earlier periods there was sometimes a preliminary leaf, blank save for a signature, or a leaf bearing the book's official licence to be printed.

As for the verso sides of the half-title and title leaves, these are frequently left blank, but by no means invariably so. It is, for instance, a common practice in modern books for the verso of the half-title leaf to bear a list of the author's previous works.

The half-title is frequently on the first leaf of a book, but sometimes it is preceded by one or more blank leaves. This, of course, is also true of the title-page in books which have no half-title.

After the title-page usually come the list of contents and any preface, introduction, or other preliminary matter that there may be ; but the contents are sometimes detailed at the end instead of at the beginning of a book. In plays the preliminary matter frequently includes the *Dramatis Personæ* and a Prologue. These preliminary pages of a book are very often numbered in a separate series, printed generally in roman numerals, from the pages of the main text, which are probably printed in Arabic figures.

The main text of a book may extend through more than one volume, and when that is so each volume probably has its own title-page and half-title, and may also have its own list of contents. Sometimes, moreover, there is a separate preface or introduction to each volume. But even when the whole of a book is contained in one volume the text is usually subdivided in some way. A play is usually broken up into acts. Other works may be divided into chapters, and sometimes there are a few larger divisions (each comprising several chapters) which are often called "books"—a special use of the word which is not likely to cause any confusion. It is very unusual for the chapters or other smaller divisions of a work to have separate title-pages or half-titles before their beginnings; usually such minor divisions are indicated merely by a heading; but it is not at all uncommon for each of the larger divisions, be they called "books" or some other name, to have a separate title-page or, more usually, half-title. This custom of separate title- or half-title-pages for the larger divisions of a book is especially common in such books as the collected dramatic works of an author. The collector should always remember the possibility of a volume of this kind having had more title-pages than the general one at the beginning, since these separate title-pages are peculiarly liable to be missing in old books.

Usually the pagination of the main text of a book runs continuously throughout a volume, but occasionally there are different series of pagination for the different sections of the volume. Take, for example, a volume of plays. Quite often each play

has separate pagination. This, of course, may only mean that the printer in setting up the whole has chosen, from some whim or fancy, to page each play separately ; but it may also mean that the book is not really one organic whole, but a collection of separate editions of the various plays with a general title-page, and perhaps other preliminary matter added. Such composite volumes are of very frequent occurrence, especially in popular literature. The point can usually be settled by an examination of the volume. The reader should see, for example, whether the signatures run continuously throughout the volume or whether they start afresh wherever there is a change of pagination. He should also see whether the paper varies from play to play ; and he should examine the separate title-pages to see whether they vary in date or not, and whether they bear any such tell-tale wording as "Second Edition" or the like. None of these points may be conclusive in itself, but the sum of evidence will soon tell one whether he is dealing with one book or with an agglomeration of several. It should be added that, in such composite volumes, the title-pages and preliminaries of the separate editions are not always left in by the publisher.

At the end of the text of a book there may follow the colophon, which has already been described. There may, more usually, be the word "Finis," or "The End," or at the end of one volume out of several, "The End of Volume I" or whatever number it may be. Frequently, especially in nineteenth-century and other modern books, the name of the printer (as opposed to the publisher) of the

book is printed at the foot of the last page. The table of contents may also come at the end, and very often there is a blank leaf (or blank leaves) or pages of advertisements. In plays the last page of text is often followed by an epilogue.

There is, however, another possible part of a book which must be mentioned in this chapter. Frequently, after the printing of a book is completed mistakes are discovered. If these are at all important, or if the author is of a careful nature, a slip of paper is printed with a list of the errors, and the corrections to be made. This slip is usually headed with some such word as "Erratum" (or, if there are several mistakes, "Errata") or "Corrigendum" (or "Corrigenda"). If no mistake has been made, but the author desires some omitted word or fact to be added to his book, he heads the slip with the word "Addendum" (or "Addenda"). These slips may be inserted almost anywhere in a book. Usually they are placed at the beginning or at the end, but when attention is to be drawn only to one passage the slip may be placed opposite that passage. These slips, from their small size and from the fact that they form no part of the actual sheets of the book, are peculiarly liable to be torn out accidentally, or to be lost when a book is re-bound. Sometimes they are actually pasted to a page and then, of course, they are less likely to be destroyed. An even safer method of drawing attention to errors in a book is to print the list of errata not on a separate slip, but on a blank page, or part of a page, of the book itself. Very frequently this is done either at the end of the book or somewhere between the title page and the first



page of the text. This method, however, cannot be followed unless the errors are discovered fairly soon.

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There are several other ways in which mistakes are corrected, but only one of these shall be described in this chapter, the remainder being held over for discussion in the chapter on "Issues and Editions." The one that must be mentioned here is one that I have only rarely seen employed—it was used, for example, in the 1798 issue of Christopher Anstey's *Fabulæ Selectæ Auctore Johanne Gay Latine Redditæ*—and consists of having the various correct readings printed, not all together on one slip, but on separate slips of paper, which are pasted into the book over the actual passages which are to be emended. This procedure is so unusual<sup>1</sup> that, when first I saw a book treated in this way, I imagined that the particular copy (which was a presentation one) had been pasted up by the author from the proofs of another edition; but the discovery of other copies of the same book, all having the same slips stuck in, showed clearly that probably the whole issue was emended by this somewhat laborious process.

It has already been pointed out that the sequence of pages is indicated by numbers, and the sequence of sheets, or at least of gatherings, by signatures. There is also a method not now always employed, but until comparatively recent times universal, by which one page of text was linked to the next. This method is by printing below the right-hand bottom corner of the text on each page the whole, or part,

<sup>1</sup> In the period with which I am most familiar. I am told this method was common in the 17th Century.

of the first word of the next page. The object, presumably, is to give the reader's mind something to go on with and thus to make less of a break in his reading while he turns the leaf or passes from one page to another. Another purpose is to give him immediate warning if, by accident, he turns over more than one leaf. The words placed at the bottom of the pages are called "catch words," and they are often of considerable assistance to the bibliographer, as will appear later.

Another essential feature of most books is the headlines of the pages. These come above the text of each page, and give sometimes the title of the book, sometimes the title of the particular chapter, sometimes an indication of the subject-matter of the individual page. Not uncommonly the headline runs across two pages—the first part appearing on the left-hand page, and the second part on the right-hand page facing it. Occasionally—in Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring*, for example—the headlines form a running commentary in verse. Printed headlines were first used by the Hoerners of Cologne in the year 1471.

Most of what has been said in this chapter is, I fear, very elementary and obvious. But this book is intended for beginners in the arts of book collecting and bibliography, and it has seemed proper to describe at some length the various parts of which a book may be expected to be composed, as to have them firmly in one's mind makes it very much easier to decide, upon looking at a particular copy of a book, whether it is perfect or imperfect. This brief account of the parts of a book, therefore, appeared to me to be a wise preliminary to the next chapter.



## CHAPTER IV

### BOOKS PERFECT AND IMPERFECT

IF a young collector were to ask to be given one piece of advice, and one only, the most valuable rule that could be given him is this : " Never buy an imperfect copy of a book." Naturally there are occasions upon which this rule may be broken. The book may be required urgently and no perfect copy may be available ; the book may be needed for a particular purpose, for which perfection is not necessary ; it may be absolutely necessary for a student to possess the book, but he may not be able to afford the price of a perfect copy ; or, lastly, no perfect copy may be known to exist. In any of these events it may be justifiable and wise to buy an imperfect copy, but it must be remembered that such a copy is never absolutely trustworthy, and for this reason—that unless one has the whole of a book before him it is impossible to be absolutely certain that it belongs to a particular edition. It is true that, in most cases, one can satisfy oneself pretty convincingly on this point, but there is always the chance that the missing part would have provided a clue to the fact that one was handling, not the desired edition, but another very much like it. An imperfect book is therefore always an unreliable tool, though at times necessity may force one to make it

serve a particular purpose. It is, therefore, necessary to consider what it is that makes a particular copy of a book perfect or imperfect.

A book is perfect when it retains every scrap of paper, printed or without print, which formed part of the sheets on which it was originally printed, excepting only any such part as was cut off by the printer or publisher before the book was issued to the public. Strictly speaking, therefore, a copy that has had its edges trimmed by a binder might be called imperfect, but the word is not normally used in this sense, and a book may be described as perfect if it contains all those parts of the printed leaves that bear any printed matter, and similar portions of any blank leaves that were originally issued with the book. The higher degree of perfection is usually described as "perfect and uncut"—which means that not only is every leaf of the book present, but that no leaf has had its edges trimmed since it first left the printing press. "Uncut" does not mean (as is so often imagined by the ignorant) that the leaves of the book, where they were joined, have not been separated with a paper-knife, and that the owner is unable to read his book. When a book is in such a condition it is called "unopened." For a book to be uncut adds materially to its value, and rightly so ; but, though one sometimes sees a book advertised for sale by a bookseller as "unopened," that condition does not, and should not, add to its value. Nor should any collector, having bought an unopened copy of a book, hesitate to open its leaves with his paper-knife. Books are meant to be read, and reading is, moreover, good for them ; it

lets air and light in among their leaves and prevents the ravages of fustiness and damp.

Besides the actual sheets of paper that went through the printing press, and that form the whole of the book proper, a book is often accompanied, when first it comes before the world, by two other kinds of matter—printed leaves of advertisements, and some form of protective covering. When advertisements are printed on part of one of the actual sheets of paper used for the printing of the text of a book, it goes without saying, perhaps, that if these advertisements are missing the book is imperfect; but even when the advertisements were separately printed on separate sheets of paper, perhaps of a different quality from that employed for the author's text, it is still desirable that they should continue to accompany the book, for they often give valuable clues to exact dates of publication or to other pertinent matters. Therefore, when a book is known always to have been issued bound up with certain sheets of advertisements, a copy which is described as perfect should contain those advertisements. Separately printed advertisement leaves of this kind were chiefly used in the nineteenth century (and, of course, they are still much used), but they also occasionally occur in earlier books; and it is—except, maybe, in some particular instances—in nineteenth- and twentieth-century books that their presence or absence makes a great difference to the value of a particular volume.

Very often small tracts have been issued to the public without any form of protective covering, but normally a book is published with something round

it to prevent its being dirtied or otherwise damaged. This something may be a binding, a case, a printed wrapper, or a plain or coloured paper wrapper without any lettering printed upon it. Since the coverings of books are, from their very function, peculiarly liable to damage, collectors do not demand that a book described as perfect should, if it was printed before about the year 1800, be in the original covering, though, naturally, where that is happily so, the book has its value enhanced to some extent. But in books printed from 1800 or so onwards, the presence or absence of the original binding, casing, or wrapper makes a very considerable difference in monetary value ; and, should such a book have been re-bound, a collector would have the right to expect that attention should be drawn to the fact by any bookseller cataloguing the volume for sale.

Where a book was merely issued in a paper wrapper, the collector has usually nothing to look for but the wrapper, which is merely a piece of paper (printed or otherwise) folded round the book so as to cover the back and the sides and stitched, gummed or wired so as to keep it in place. No leaves of paper are usually placed between the wrapper and the book it covers. The matter is different, however, with books either bound or cased ; and, incidentally, it may be explained that a book is *bound* when the leaves are sewn on to cords which are incorporated into the back of the binding so that that back adheres closely to the leaves. If you open a bound volume you will not be able to see a hollow space between the leaves of the book and the back of the binding. When a book is *cased* (as are almost

all inexpensive modern books) the leaves are sewn on to tapes, a strip of thick paper or thin cloth is gummed over the back of the leaves and the tapes (this forming the real back of the book), and the projecting ends of the tapes, with the edge of the paper or cloth, are gummed to the inner edges of the sides of the case. If you open a cased book you will be able to see a hollow space between the back of the case and the back of the book itself. But, whether a book is bound or cased, it will usually have placed between it and each side of the binding or case a folded sheet of paper, one half of which is gummed flat to the inner side of the binding or case, with the other half only attached to the inner edge of the first (or last) leaf of the book by means of a little gum.

These pieces of paper are called "end-papers," and, though they form no part of the book proper, a collector expects them to be present in any fairly modern book which is sold in its original binding. These end-papers are often made of coloured or patterned paper.

The reader who has followed me so far is now in a position to know what is meant by a perfect or imperfect copy of a book. But he must be warned of a third kind of book—the "made-up copy." This takes little description, since it is simply a copy which has been constructed by taking bits from two or more imperfect copies of a particular volume, and by fitting them together in the right order so as to have the superficial appearance of being one perfect copy. At first sight there seems to be no reason why this should not be done, but a little reflection



will show one that a made-up copy is an even more treacherous thing than an imperfect copy. Your made-up book has the appearance of being in its original condition, and it is not always easy to sort it out into its component parts, but there is every possibility that any person who tries to use a made-up copy for purposes of scholarship may be seriously misled. He has no guarantee, for example, that all the leaves of his copy come even from the same edition of the book. Take, for example, a work that has been through three editions in quick succession. Say that the author has made minor corrections and alterations both in the second and third editions, but that neither edition has been completely re-set by the printer. It is easily conceivable that some unscrupulous or unwise person should "make up" an imperfect copy of the first edition with leaves taken from the second and third editions, since, to a casual eye, they look the same. A scholar who edited a new edition of the book from a made-up copy of this kind would probably, without suspecting it, produce a text which was never at any time approved by the author of the book. Therefore I would warn the collector to be on his guard against made-up copies. No reputable dealer will, knowingly, sell him one without drawing attention to the fact that it *is* a made-up copy, but the misfortune is that sometimes a dealer will in the press of business not notice that a particular book has been "made up," and in all good faith will sell it as perfect. And since all literary scholars are not skilled bibliographers, the danger of serious errors being created by these abominations is a very real one.

Now, if the collector is to buy only perfect books, how is he to make sure that every part of a particular book which he is offered is present? If a printed description of what the book should be like is available, his task is, naturally, comparatively easy; but if there is no description handy, he must rely upon his knowledge and wits to serve him as best they may. It may be useful, therefore, to suggest here some of the most obvious tests of perfection which may be applied.

First of all there is the number of leaves in the book. If it is a folio a perfect copy should normally consist of a number of leaves which is a multiple of two; similarly, the number of leaves in a quarto is normally a multiple of four; in an octavo a multiple of eight; in a duodecimo a multiple of twelve; and so on. This, however, is not invariably so. The first and last sections of a book frequently consist of less than the full complement of leaves, for the reason that preliminary matter (everything, that is, before the beginning of the main part of the author's text) is often set up by the printer after the main text, and that, as regards the end of a book, it is obvious that the author's text will not usually fill an exact multiple of two, four, eight, or however many leaves it may be. Sometimes, even, an incomplete section of leaves occurs part way through a book, but when this is so it does not usually present much difficulty to the collector, for the continuity of the matter and of the pagination will tell him whether there is anything missing or not.

When, however, the first or last section, or signature, of a book is of less than the normal number of



leaves, it is much more difficult to ascertain whether it was so issued by the printer, or whether something is missing, for it has to be remembered that the beginnings and ends of books are the parts most liable to injury or mutilation. The collector must learn, therefore, to gather together and value the evidence which the book itself gives him. As an instance of the methods by which this may be done let us take a fairly common type of book, the eighteenth-century quarto poem, and see what tests we may apply to it. Such a book often consists of a half-title, title-page, letter of dedication, text of the poem and a blank leaf or leaf of advertisements at the end ; but frequently any one of these parts except the title-page and the text may be absent from a perfect copy, and frequently, also, only the central signatures of the book, starting with signature B and numbering, perhaps, three or four, are complete quarto sections of four leaves. How, then, are we to decide whether a book of this kind is perfect or not ?

Let us take the beginning of the book first. Suppose that only one leaf, that bearing the title-page on its *recto*, precedes signature B, on the first page of which begins the text of the poem. In such an instance the presumption is that at least one leaf (*i.e.*, that bearing the half-title) is missing. If we can see the ragged, torn inner edge of such a leaf projecting<sup>1</sup> there is little doubt about it, and the book almost certainly began with a half-sheet (two leaves), of which the first has been torn away. But

<sup>1</sup> I am here presuming that the reader is examining a bound book, though it is much easier to settle problems when a book is unbound.

often no such torn edge is visible, and we have still to decide whether the beginning of our book is perfect or not. We must now consider the possibility that our title-page leaf does not belong, properly speaking, to the first section of the book, but that it may be the last leaf of the final section of the book, folded backwards so as to come round the earlier signatures and appear, when the book is bound, before them. If this is so, it will be connected at the back fold with the first leaf of the last section of the book, and that section will naturally appear to consist of only three leaves. Whether the preliminary leaf is in fact part of the last signature can usually be told by examining the chain-marks, which (as was explained in Chapter II) run horizontally across the leaves of a quarto. If the chain-marks of the title-page and of the first leaf of the last signature appear to be exactly on the same level, and to be continuations the ones of the others, then probably the title-page is merely printed on the *recto* of the last leaf of the book, which is turned back so that it appears as if it were the first. If we are satisfied that this is so—and a watermark, flaw, or other peculiarity in the individual sheet of paper will sometimes give us added evidence—then we can rest pretty well assured that our book was never issued with any leaf before the title-page. Further proof can sometimes be obtained, in the case of an uncut copy, from an examination of the top edges of the title-leaf and of the third leaf of the last signature. These, by the correspondence or otherwise of small irregularities, will show whether they were once united. If, however, we come to the

conclusion that this process of folding back the last leaf of the book has not been employed—and it was used, I imagine, only in comparatively thin books—then there is, so far as I am aware, no means of making certain from an inspection of one copy alone, that the title was not preceded by another leaf—half-title or blank. In the particular instance of eighteenth-century books, nevertheless, one can be fairly certain that if the price of the book is printed on the title page then there was no half-title. The converse of this is naturally not true, for not all books had their price printed on them ; and in any event I should not like to say that this test is one that applies, even in a rough and ready way, to books of all periods, though it may prove to do so.

So much for the case in which our quarto has only one leaf to its first signature. If it has two leaves, and they appear from the manner in which the chain-marks in each of them seem to join in the back of the book, to be united together, then the first signature is probably complete—though there is always the possibility that it is not. Again, there may be three leaves, and then the presumption is that the signature is incomplete, unless one can demonstrate that the fourth leaf was removed before the book was issued to the public, or that the three leaves are not all part of one sheet.

Let us now examine the final signature, assuming that it bears the end of the text, concluding, perhaps, with the word “Finis.” If there are four leaves to this signature, it is itself complete, and, unless we have evidence to the contrary, we must assume that the

book is so, too. But if there are less than the normal four leaves, then we must try to find out whether the book was so published or whether something is missing. Here, again, *mutatis mutandis*, we may apply most of the tests that we applied to the beginning of the book. We look to see that no jagged edges of torn-out leaves are showing ; if there are only two leaves we try, from the chain-marks in the paper, to discover whether they are joined together at the back or not ; if there are three leaves, or if there is only one, we consider the possibility of one leaf having been turned back to form the half-title or title-leaf. Occasionally I have found it possible to tell whether the last remaining leaf of a book was originally its last leaf by the presence of an " offset " upon it. An offset, it must be explained, is caused when two sheets are put one on top of the other before the ink is properly dry, so that the ink on the one stains the other. The offset can sometimes be read quite easily by holding the book in front of a mirror. Once, at least, I remember finding on the last page of a book the offset of the first page—from which I inferred that the books had been printed, folded and stacked one on top of the other, and that the book as I then saw it was certainly complete. Similarly, if on the last page of a book the offset of an epilogue, or a page of advertisements, is to be seen, it is pretty certain that another leaf at least should be present, and that the book is imperfect.

I have suggested these few methods of testing the perfection of an eighteenth-century poetical quarto as some indication of the methods the collector

should adopt. In every type and period of book the expert will devise his own tests, and will use them in the light of his knowledge of his own speciality. In a primer of this kind the thing to be done is to indicate the general method of attack and to leave the rest to the collector to develop for himself.

As, however, the reader has been warned not only against imperfect, but also against made-up, copies of books, something must be added as to the method of detecting these. A made-up copy is most easily to be detected when it is composed of leaves from two copies of different sizes and these have not been re-trimmed so as to match—but this is, perhaps, too obvious to need more than mere mention. When there is no apparent difference in the size of the leaves the fact that not all of them come from the same copy can often be told in the following way. A great many books, especially plays, poems and miscellaneous pamphlets, were not originally issued bound, but in paper wrappers. These books were stabbed through with a stout needle and the sheets were sewn together with coarse thread. If afterwards such a book is bound, it nevertheless still bears near its inner edge the old “stab-marks.” Naturally enough, since this process of sewing was done by hand, no two copies have the “stab-marks” exactly the same distance apart. If, therefore, you are offered a re-bound book in which these “stab-marks” are visible, look through it to see that they are always in the same relative positions. It is not to be expected that those on one leaf should all be exactly opposite those on the leaves next to it, for in binding the book<sup>r</sup> the leaves are liable to be shifted slightly



up or down or to one side ; but if you find that the "stab-marks" on some leaves of your book are wider apart than those on other leaves then you may be sure that your copy has been made up. This is, I think, a very good test ; but, unfortunately, it does not apply to all books. Where a book has not originally been stabbed through, I presume that (if you are suspicious) the only way of making *certain* that the book is all of one piece is to have the binding taken to bits and to examine the leaves in order to make sure that they have all always been bound in exactly the same way. Obviously you cannot do this to the books that are offered to you for sale, so the common-sense thing to do is only to buy re-bound books from reputable dealers, unless you feel quite certain of what you are getting.

One form of imperfection to which I have not referred in this chapter is the replacing of missing leaves of very rare books by facsimiles. To be able to detect a first-rate facsimile is an accomplishment only to be acquired by long use and experience, and no hints to amateur detectives will be given here. The best facsimiles were done in the middle of the nineteenth century. They were first traced by hand and then lithographed on paper matching as nearly as possible that of the book itself.



## CHAPTER V

### ISSUES AND EDITIONS

THOSE lovers of books who, without possessing any special knowledge of bibliography, from time to time amuse themselves by looking through the catalogues sent to them by second-hand booksellers, are often puzzled by seeing that, while one book is described as a "first edition," another may be called a "first issue"; and it has to be admitted that, though there is a perfectly definite meaning attached to each of these phrases, they are not understood by the general public, and are even used somewhat loosely, at times, by those who ought to know better. An issue is a subdivision of an edition, and the confusion which exists in the minds of many booksellers and collectors arises not so much from a failure to realise that fact, as from a failure to grasp that there may be many differences between various copies of one edition of a book, but that not all these differences constitute different issues, and that not all differences can be arranged in a chronological series in the order of their appearance. The aim of my present chapter is to give definitions of the words "edition" and "issue," and to discuss which of the variations of an edition are, or are not, definite "issues."

An edition may be defined as the aggregation of

all the copies of a book printed at one time and entirely, or mainly, from one setting up of the type. The edition is a definite unit, and in every case has limits of size, which, though they may now be forgotten, were at least perfectly clear to the original publisher. For a variety of reasons, however, not all copies of one edition are identical, for the production of an edition allows of variations being introduced both intentionally and unintentionally, and these variations may be either in the actual type or in the paper on which the book is printed ; or, of course, they may be combined so as to affect both.

To take variations of paper first. A book may be printed on different kinds of paper, mixed indiscriminately so that every copy will show a different combination of the kinds. Or the printer may begin to print on one kind of paper, run out of his supply of that kind, and print the remaining sheets on another. Such variations are more or less accidental, but there are also intentional changes to be considered. In early printed books, and in finely printed modern books, a few special copies are often printed, not on paper, but on vellum. And in the eighteenth century it was a common practice to print, for sale at a higher price or for gift to the author's friends, a limited number of copies on a larger size of paper, or on thicker paper, than the ordinary copies of the edition. These special copies are known as "Large Paper Copies," or "Thick Paper Copies," or "Large and Thick Paper Copies."

Then as to differences of printing. It has always been possible to make alterations in type while a

book is in the course of being printed. Very often, for instance, more than one publisher is concerned in the publication of a book, and instead of printing on the title-page of every copy the names of all the publishers, it may be desired that each publisher should have copies, bearing his name only, for disposal. In this event so many title-page sheets will be printed bearing A's. name, then printing will be stopped, A's. name taken out and B's. substituted, so many more printed, and so on as often as necessary. Again, a similar process has occasionally been followed when an author has wished (no doubt for due consideration received or anticipated) to dedicate his edition to more than one person ; and there is at least one English poem known of which every copy is dedicated to a different person, whose name has been printed in a blank space left for the purpose in the original printing ! Deliberate alterations of type have also often been caused by the correction of mistakes, either in the text itself or by putting a list of " Errata " on a blank page, and by the alteration of the printed price on large or thick paper copies. Sometimes, even, the title of a book has been changed in the course of printing.

Still more drastic changes in the printing of a book take place when it is thought advisable to increase the size of the edition (*i.e.*, the number of copies in it) after a certain number of sheets have been printed and their type dispersed. It is then necessary to reset, and reprint from the new setting of the type, all those sheets ; with the result that, when the book is eventually sold to the public, copies will

be offered which contain an indiscriminate mixture, in each of the possible combinations, of those sheets which exist in one state only with those which exist in two. Copies of a book printed in this fashion will provide the bibliographer with many puzzles; but even more puzzling to him—until he gets the clue to the mystery—will be a comparison of several copies of a book which, in order to hasten publication, has had every sheet set up in two sets of type, printed on different machines, and the sheets sewn or bound together indiscriminately. Examples of books constructed in this way sometimes occur, and, since it is practically impossible to set up the same text twice in type without making some slight typographical differences, such books show a bewildering series of variations.

Another way by which variation between different copies of one edition is often introduced is by the use of "cancel-leaves." Let us say that for some reason it is decided to suppress, or considerably to alter, a passage in a book after the whole edition has been printed. The leaf bearing the passage in question is cut away from its companions in the sheet, a new leaf is printed with the revised version of the text, and pasted to the "stub" of the old leaf. The new leaf is called a "cancel-leaf," and cancel-leaves (which are very common) should always be searched for when any detailed examination of a book is being made. They generally bear signatures, whether the original leaves did so or not, and the signature is often differentiated in some way—say by an asterisk—from the other signatures in the book. The presence of a signature in an unusual

place, or of a signature different in kind from the others, will therefore often give us the hint that a cancel-leaf is present. A more certain guide lies in the stub of the cancelled leaf, which is usually visible if the book is looked at at all carefully.

When one has discovered that a book in which one is interested has a cancel-leaf, it is always wise to examine every available copy of it, in the hope of discovering a copy which still retains, by some accident, the uncanceled leaf ; for thereby one may learn the reason of the cancellation, which is often both instructive and amusing. An example, which has recently been brought to light by the diligence of Mr. R. W. Chapman, is that of leaf D8 of Dr. Johnson's *Journey to the Western Islands*. Mr. Chapman noticed that every copy which he could find of this book had both leaf D8 and leaf U4 cancelled, so he set himself to find a copy with the leaves uncanceled. At length his search was rewarded, so far as D8 was concerned, and he discovered a copy (but too late to buy it, for Mr. R. B. Adam was before him !) of the uncanceled state of this leaf, which contained the following tilt at the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield :—

“Let us not, however, make too much haste to despise our neighbours. There is now, as I have heard, a body of men, not less decent or virtuous than the Scottish Council, longing to melt the lead of an English cathedral. What they shall melt, it were just that they should swallow.”

Leaf U 4, in its original condition, still, I believe, remains to be found—but it can hardly reveal any—



thing better, or more typical of Johnson, than the last sentence.<sup>1</sup>

A very common type of cancel is that of the title-page leaf, and title-leaves have been cancelled for a variety of reasons—sometimes to correct an error or to give a preferable version of the title-page ; sometimes to alter the name of the publisher when a portion of an already printed edition has been sold to another publisher ; sometimes to foist the unsold copies of a book on to the public in the guise of a new edition. The second of these reasons often, at the present time, operates when so many sets of sheets of an English book are sold to an American publisher or *vice versâ*. An instance that occurs to me of a cancel-title, inserted for the third reason, is that of one of the most interesting of eighteenth-century poetical miscellanies, the *New Miscellany of Original Poems*, edited by Anthony Hammond, which was first published in 1720, but of which the unsold sheets were re-issued with a cancel-title dated 1740.

The typographical variations mentioned so far are all deliberate, but variations also have accidental origins. After the type has been set, it may be accidentally disarranged, and either not put right at all, or re-arranged not quite in its original position. One of the commonest causes of minor disarrangements of type in old hand-set books was that letters sometimes adhered to the pads, with which ink was applied to them, and were pulled out of their places,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chapman has recorded his impression that out of all the eighteenth-century books he has collated, one in every four or five contains one cancel-leaf at least.



with the result that sometimes gaps were left or letters were put back upside down or in the wrong position. This has been the cause of an infinite number of small differences between various copies of one edition.

The reader is now in possession of the chief causes of variation within an edition, and must proceed to consider what types of variation constitute separate issues of that edition, and which of them are capable of an at least probable chronological arrangement. The definition of an issue is generally held to depend upon typographical differences and not upon differences of paper. Bibliographers speak, for instance, of "large paper copies" of a book, but not of a "large paper issue," unless there are typographical differences as well as differences of paper to distinguish it. I conceive, however, that one might properly base an issue on differences of paper alone if some copies of a small pamphlet, printed on not more than one sheet, were on a different kind of paper from the remainder of the edition ; but even in an instance of this kind there would have to be some evidence that all the copies printed on one paper were printed consecutively, and that the edition was not merely printed on the two kinds of paper indiscriminately. This brings us to the definition of an issue, which may be described as a number of the copies of an edition, marked off from the rest by certain typographical peculiarities, all produced in a consecutive series at some definite point during the period of the printing of the edition. It is essential to the definition of an issue that it should be more than an

accidental variation of one copy, and also it must be postulable that at some definite period, or place, during the original sale of the edition to the public a person, going to buy a copy, would probably receive a copy of the particular issue in question. This last point, I say, must be postulable ; it is, however, not necessary that one should be able now to state precisely at *what* time, or place, a particular issue was for sale—that is a matter of history which we cannot always know. What is essential is that the books which are segregated into an issue should form a coherent unit within the larger body of the edition, and that their typographical or other peculiarities should all have been produced consecutively.

For a copy of a book to be described as a first issue, it should be evident, first, that the variations it shows are such as definitely to form an issue ; and, second, that the varying part of the book is in its earliest state. One can go further and say that sometimes such an issue was also the first sold to the public ; but of this it is not usually possible to be certain, for it is clear that copies of an edition are not necessarily sold in the same order as that in which they were produced—though in certain cases there may be a presumption that this is so.

Which, then, are the typographical variations on which an issue can be based ? Any deliberate alteration of the type of an edition is enough to split it into two issues ; but the position is more complicated when there are a number of such alterations scattered throughout the book, for these alterations may have been made either all at one time, or at different times, and in either case it may happen that the sheets

containing them are bound up in quite indiscriminate combinations. When this is the case it is not justifiable to describe every combination of the corrected and uncorrected sheets as a separate issue, for there is usually no evidence of any other connection—except that of mere chance—between the various copies showing the same combination of the differing sheets. It may sometimes, however, be possible to show that one series of such combinations represents a definite issue—a conclusion which demonstrates that there is sometimes variation within an issue, as well as within an edition, a fact which has too often been overlooked by those describing or cataloguing books. The trouble is that one only learns by experience, and I fear that I myself have at times described mere variations of copies as different issues.

Again, an occasional dropped or turned letter or numeral is not, as a general rule, any indication of difference of issue. Obviously, on the other hand, a cancel-leaf is a certain proof of the possibility of two issues existing, though sometimes no copy of the issue containing the uncanceled leaf is known to survive, and no such copy may, in fact, ever have left the printer's office.

To illustrate the difference between mere variation and difference of issue let me take the case of certain sheets of a particular book. When, some time ago, I was compiling a bibliography of the first editions of Oliver Goldsmith's books, I was considerably puzzled over the first edition of *She Stoops to Conquer*, an octavo in half-sheets, published in 1773. This book showed so many differences in

the various copies I examined that I was forced to describe it not as a whole, but signature by signature, treating, that is, each gathering as a separate entity. The most interesting parts of the first edition of *She Stoops to Conquer* are the sections (each of four leaves, since the book is an octavo in half-sheets) L and M, and it is of the lessons to be learnt from these two half-sheets only that I am about to write here. What I first noticed about sections L and M was that in comparing several copies I found no fewer than six variants of section L and four of section M; and in each case the differences affected the same three points: the signatures, the numbering of the pages, and the headings of the pages. When, as in their final states, the two half-sheets are correctly printed, the signatures are L and L2 and M and M2 (the first two leaves only of each half-sheet being signed), the pages are numbered 73–80 in section L and 81–88 in section M, and the headings run throughout thus:—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer; Or, /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

But in each section there were other states, and in my bibliography I set them out thus, giving a number to each variant:—

SECTION L.

*Variant 1.*

p. 73	is misnumbered	65
p. 74	„ „	82

p. 75	is misnumbered	83
p. 76	”	68
p. 77	”	69
p. 78	”	86
p. 79	”	87
p. 80	”	72

Signatures : L is misprinted I.

L2 is correct.

The heading on p. 73 (misnumbered 65) is—

A Comedy.

The headings on pp. 76, 77 (misnumbered 68, 69) are :—

The Mistakes Of A Night ; / A Comedy.

The heading on p. 80 (misnumbered 72) is :—

The Mistakes Of A Night ;

Otherwise the headings are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; OR/

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

*Variant 2.*

Just like Variant 1 except that p. 74 is unnumbered.

*Variant 3.*

p. 73	is misnumbered	81
p. 74	”	66
p. 75	”	67
p. 76	”	84
p. 77	”	85
p. 78	”	70
p. 79	”	71
p. 80	”	88

Signatures : L correct.

L2 misprinted I2.

The headings on pp. 74, 75 (misnumbered 66, 67) and 78, 79 (misnumbered 70, 71) are :—

[*Left page*]

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night ; / A Comedy.

Otherwise the headings are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; OR /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

*Variant 4.*

p. 73	is misnumbered	81
p. 74	„ „	82
p. 75	„ „	83
p. 76	„ „	84
p. 77	„ „	85
p. 78	„ „	86
p. 79	„ „	87
p. 80	„ „	88

Signatures : L and L2 correct.

The headings throughout are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; OR /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

*Variant 5.*

Exactly like Variant 4 except that the pages are correctly numbered 73-80.

*Variant 6.*

Exactly like Variant 5 except that the headings run :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; Or, /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

This is the final, and correct, state of this section.



## SECTION M.

*Variant 1.*

p. 81	is misnumbered	73
p. 82	„ „	90
p. 83	„ „	91
p. 84	„ „	76
p. 85	„ „	77
p. 86	„ „	94
p. 87	„ „	95
p. 88	„ „	80

Signatures : M is misprinted K.

M2 correct.

The heading on p. 81 (misnumbered 73) is :—

A Comedy.

The headings on pp. 84, 85 (misnumbered 76, 77) are :—

The Mistakes Of A Night ; / A Comedy.

The heading on p. 88 (misnumbered 80) is :—

The Mistakes Of A Night ;

Otherwise the headings are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; OR /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

*Variant 2.*

p. 81	is misnumbered	89
p. 82	„ „	74
p. 83	„ „	75
p. 84	„ „	92
p. 85	„ „	93
p. 86	„ „	78
p. 87	„ „	79
p. 88	„ „	96

Signatures : M correct.

M2 is misprinted K2.

The headings on pp. 82, 83 (misnumbered 74, 75) and 86, 87 (misnumbered 78, 79) are :—

[*Left page*]

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night ; / A Comedy.

Otherwise the headings are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; OR /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

*Variant 3.*

p. 81	is misnumbered	89
p. 82	„	90
p. 83	„	91
p. 84	„	92
p. 85	„	93
p. 86	„	94
p. 87	„	95
p. 88	„	96

Signatures : M and M2 correct.

The headings throughout are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; OR /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

*Variant 4.*

Pp. 81–88 correctly numbered.

Signatures correct.

The headings throughout are :—

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer ; Or, /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

So far I got in compiling my bibliography, but I did not then realise the order that lay behind the seeming chaos of the variants of these two sections. Later on I realised part of what lay beneath these misnumberings, wrong signatures and wrong headings, and that learned bibliographer, Mr. R. B. McKerrow, afterwards cleared up still more points and carried the explanation a stage further. What apparently happened I will now try to explain, for it is an excellent example of the value of variations of different kinds in determining issue.

If the differences between the different states of each of the half-sheets L and M be examined, it will be noticed that all variants except one are marked by differences affecting the same three features—right or wrong page numbering, signatures, and headings. The one exception is variant 2 of sheet L, which is only differentiated from variant 1 by the fact that p. 74 is unnumbered. Probably the two numerals 7 and 4 were pulled out accidentally by the ink pad, or, perhaps, they were covered over by a scrap of loose paper so that they did not leave an impression on the half-sheet. In any case, one can be sure that these dropped numerals are a purely accidental feature, which may have occurred, quite possibly, in only one copy. Their absence is of no particular bibliographical importance, and may be taken as an example of that kind of accidental variation upon which no difference of issue can properly be based. But the other variants all fit into an orderly sequence of events.

Take, first of all, the variants 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of half-sheet L. If variants 1 and 3 of this section are examined it will be seen that *between them* they

supply two complete and orderly sequences in the case of each of the three kinds of difference—numbering, signature and heading. In the numbering of the pages we get the two sequences 65–72 and 81–88. In signatures we get both I and I2 and L and L2. In the headings we get both

[*Left page*]

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night; / A Comedy.

and

[*Left page*]

She Stoops To Conquer; OR /

[*Right page*]

The Mistakes Of A Night.

Furthermore, the first of each of these pairs of characteristics runs in conjunction with, in the same pages as, the first of each of the other two pairs; and on further examination we notice that these pages are on the same side of the half-sheet. It therefore becomes clear that the type for each side of this half-sheet was first set up to run right through with the page numbers 65–72, the signatures I and I2 and the headings [*left page*] “The Mistakes Of A Night;” and [*right page*] “A Comedy.” This version of the type was printed a certain number of times for each side of the half-sheet, but never, I think, on both sides of the same piece of paper. The mistake probably arose from a new compositor (one, that is, who had not set up the early sections of the book) taking over the work with section L. Somehow he must have had the idea that his first signature was I (and not L) and, furthermore, to have assumed that the text of the play had begun with signature A, and

that, therefore, his first page would be numbered 65 since it was preceded by eight signatures of eight pages each. This gives us the explanation of why the signature and pagination misprints of the first state of the type of this half-sheet came to go together. As to the headlines, we may guess that "The Mistakes Of A Night ; A Comedy" was an early form of the title of the play which may have still remained on the later parts of Goldsmith's manuscript, though the compositor who set up the sections previous to L had been informed that a new title had been chosen. We may also assume that our new compositor was at first unaware of the change.

The next step would be that someone would come to the compositor and say, "Look here, this ought to be signature L and the headlines ought to be 'She Stoops to Conquer ; Or, the Mistakes of a Night.'" The compositor then altered the signatures to L and L2 and also altered the headlines though, by some carelessness, he set up the word "or" with two capitals and without a comma after it. But what the compositor was *not* told was that p. 1 of the book was not on the first leaf of signature A, as he imagined, but of signature B. He, therefore, again made a mistake with the numbers of the pages, for he naturally imagined that if A began with p. 1, L must begin with p. 81, and he therefore paged the section 81-88. This setting of the type was then printed on the other sides of the half-sheets already printed on one of their sides with the earlier setting, with the result that Variants 1 and 3 were produced. Next, the already half-printed half-sheets having all been used up, the revised setting of the

text was printed on both sides of fresh half-sheets, with the result that variant 4 was produced.

When a certain number of half-sheets had been completed in this way, the compositor was informed that p. 1 was not on leaf A1 recto, but on B1 recto, and he therefore altered his pagination so as to run from 73 to 80, which was, of course, correct. The half-sheets now printed produced Variant 5 of section L. But the story was not yet finished, for there still remained in the headline on the left-hand pages the ugly "OR" spelt with two capitals and without a following comma. The last correction was to substitute the setting "Or," and the type was then in a condition to produce the final, and completely correct, state of the half-sheet, which I have called Variant 6.

Now, if the variants of section M be examined it will be seen that the same sequence of errors (*mutatis mutandis*) occurs as in section L, and we can assume that the same compositor was responsible for them. We see that the pages must first have been numbered 73-80 with the signatures K and K2, and with the same heading mistakes as in the first setting of the type of section L. We then see that a precisely similar series of corrections, or attempted corrections, took place, with precisely similar results in section M to those in section L. It is also clear that the following variants of the two sections correspond with each other :—

SECTION L.		SECTION M.
Variant 1	corresponds with	Variant 1.
Variant 3	" "	Variant 2.
Variant 4	" "	Variant 3.
Variant 6	" "	Variant 4.



Only two of the variants in section L, therefore, are unmatched in section M. Of these, Variant 2, as I have already pointed out, is due to a dropped numeral, and being of no bibliographical significance need expect no corresponding variant in section M. But a similar variant to Variant 5 in section L must, I feel sure, exist in section M, though I happen never to have met with it. I consider it, however, almost certain that some copies of sheet M were printed completely correctly except for the "OR" in the headlines, and that someday one of these will turn up.

Now the point of all this long account of the variations to be found in these two half-sheet sections of the first edition of *She Stoops to Conquer* is this : that it shows clearly that every difference does not in itself constitute a separate issue of the edition. It is evident that in section L, for instance, any of the Variants 1, 2 or 3 might be described as a "first issue," and that it is impossible to arrange them in any chronological order. On the other hand, however, Variants 4, 5 and 6 can be definitely shown to be later than the first group of variants (*i.e.*, Variants 1, 2 and 3) and can also be shown (as I have already done here) to have been printed in the order in which they are arranged. Therefore it is clear that of this half-sheet alone there are four groups of variants, which might properly be called four issues if the book consisted of only the four leaves of section L. We see, further, that whereas one of these four groups contains three variants, each of the others contains one only ; thus it becomes evident that every variant does not constitute an issue and that,

conversely, an issue may have within it several variants. This last point can be made still more clear when we consider not only one section of the book, but the book as a whole. We see that, evidently, there is no sort of guarantee that corresponding variants of different sections should be bound together, and experience teaches us that, as a matter of actual fact, the variants of different sections were bound together in all sorts of combinations. The result is that in a really complicated book like *She Stoops to Conquer*, in which almost every section shows some variants, it is quite impossible to divide the edition into a number of definite issues in the proper sense of the term. All we can say is that copies of the book may occur in which any combination of sections, from that in which every section is in its earliest state to that in which every section is in its latest state, is to be seen. But he would be a bold bibliographer who would lay down what were the exact limits of the "first issue" of such a book—and there is no demonstrable cohesion (as to time or place of original sale to the public) even between copies showing the same combination of variations; rather there is every probability that a purchaser who, on the first day of publication, bought a dozen copies, would have found no two copies identical.

In such books then, though an amazing amount of variation exists, it is not possible to arrange issues in order of appearance, nor even to split the whole mass of the edition into issues at all. In certain other books it is possible to differentiate the issues, but yet without being able to arrange them chrono-

logically. Take, as an example of a book of this kind, the second folio edition, 1632, of Shakespeare's *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies*. According to Messrs. Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue of English Books*, 1475-1640, copies of this are to be found with the names of five different booksellers in the imprint (*i.e.*, that part of the title-page which states who printed the book, for whom, and where it is to be bought, etc.). Now I do not suppose it is possible to say in what order Thomas Cotes, who printed the whole edition, struck off the copies for the various booksellers who shared in the publication. But it is certain that each of these variants may properly be called an issue, for it had certainly about it the cohesion of place—that is to say that at John Smethwick's shop only copies with Smethwick's name in the imprint were sold, and so on. Moreover, it is almost equally certain that all the title-pages bearing a particular bookseller's name were printed consecutively, so that the issue also has cohesion as to the time at which the relevant parts of the copies composing it were produced.

If, however, when the edition of a book is divided between several booksellers (or publishers) the alteration of name is effected, not by an alteration of type while the book is being printed, but by cutting out the first title-leaf and substituting a cancel title, it is clear that we can say that the issue with the uncanceled title-leaf is the first issue, for obviously a cancel-leaf must be later than the leaf which it cancels. But when no cancel-leaf exists it is difficult to decide which issue is the first, unless the alteration of type has been done so clumsily as to give us a clue

in the awkward spacing of the later arrangement of the type.

Often it is extremely difficult to decide which of two issues of a book is the earlier. It is sometimes assumed that when the difference lies in a certain passage, which is correct in one issue, but incorrect in the other, the issue containing incorrect reading of the passage is the earlier. This is, perhaps, true in a general way. It is probably usually the case that a mistake occurs in the first setting up of a book and is corrected later ; but it should never be forgotten that the converse is also possible, and that the mistake may somehow have crept into the text during the period of printing. Much, I think, depends on the nature of the error. From a meaningless misprint affecting, perhaps, only a letter or two of a word, no very definite conclusion is to be drawn. It may almost as easily have occurred late as early, excepting, of course, in some modern books, set up, for instance, by linotype machine. But when we find the definite change from a false sense to the true sense, or from an error that might easily occur to the correction of that error, we may reasonably assume that the better reading is the later reading. Let me give a concrete instance. In 1779 Richard Brinsley Sheridan published in quarto his *Verses to the Memory of Garrick*, and dedicated the book to Lady Spencer. Now, in some copies the book is dedicated to this lady with the greatest " difference " and in others with the greatest " deference." To my mind it is obvious that " difference " could not have slipped in in the course of printing (and the fact that it contains one more letter than " deference " makes

this still more improbable), but that it must have been set up originally and corrected after the edition was partly printed. We are therefore justified in saying, with confidence, that the first issue of this book has "difference" in the dedication, and that the second issue has "deference."

I said not far back in this chapter that a cancel-leaf must necessarily be later than the leaf it cancels. This is of course as true as it is obvious, but it must not always be assumed that a copy of a book which bears a cancel-leaf in a particular place is necessarily later than another copy which has no cancel-leaf in that place. Again, let us consider a concrete instance. Mark Akenside's *Odes on Several Subjects*, quarto, 1745, is a common book and its first edition is divisible into three issues, of which only the middle issue contains a cancel-leaf. The leaf in question is B1 bearing the pages 9 and 10. Now it might well be that a collector, having two copies of this book, would notice that in one copy leaf B1 was a cancel and in the other not so. He might be puzzled, however, to find that there was no apparent difference between the text of the two leaves, and that therefore there appeared to be no reason for the cancel. Acting, however, on the rule that a cancel-leaf is always later than the leaf it cancels, he might still decide that the issue with the uncanceled leaf was earlier than the other. He would, nevertheless, be wrong, for the reason that (as I have already said) there are three issues of the book, which can, I think, be arranged in a chronological sequence thus. In the first issue, for some extraordinary reason which I do not at all understand, on leaf B1 verso was



printed, not p. 10 and its contents, but p. 52 and its contents. This was discovered after a certain number of copies had been printed, leaf B1 was cut out and a cancel-leaf with p. 10 correctly printed on its verso was inserted. But, for the printing of the last copies of the edition, the type was altered and a completely correct sheet B was produced, which resulted in the issue which our collector imagined to be the first because it contained no cancel-leaf. The moral of which is, once more, that it is unsafe to dogmatise as to the order of issues unless one feels certain that one knows the whole story ; but that, when all the evidence is before one, one may venture on a ordered classification of issues if an adequate reason for that classification appears to exist.

It must also be remembered that a book is printed sheet by sheet, not copy by copy. The combination of sheets in a copy is fortuitous, so that, when variations affect several sheets of a book, so many combinations occur that it is impossible to divide the edition into a definite number of neatly arranged issues.

Very much more might be written on the subject of issues and editions, but this is only a primer, and I have perhaps said enough to set the reader's mind working for itself upon this problem. By considering the points illustrated in this chapter and the general lines on which they have been treated, he will be able to clear his own mind and to know pretty exactly what he means when he speaks of an issue or of an edition. He will also, I trust, begin to be wholesomely disinclined to dogmatise about the priority of one issue over another.



## CHAPTER VI

### HOW TO DESCRIBE A BOOK

THE reader has, in the preceding chapters of this primer, been given some idea of the sizes and parts of books, of what constitutes a perfect book, and of the meaning of the words "issue" and "edition." Probably the most useful matter to which he can now proceed to give his attention is the various methods—or rather the varying forms of one method—by which books are described in writing by bibliographers.

The object of a written description of a book is to enable those who read the description to picture for themselves what the book is like. Now it is obvious that this cannot be done completely by means of a written description ; only the book itself, or, short of that, a photographic facsimile, could convey an exact idea of the book as a whole. It is, however, possible by a written description to inform any person, who is conversant with books, of the general lines on which a particular book is arranged, and thereby to give him something by which he can test a book which he believes to be the same as that described, and which is in his possession. The reliability of such a test depends entirely on the accuracy, clarity and fullness of the description given.

A collection of such descriptions, dealing, say, with the works of a particular author or period, or with the books associated with a particular subject, is called a bibliography ; and the fullness of the descriptions in any bibliography depends on its size and the number of books with which it has to deal. When a large bibliography is devoted to the works of one single author—as in the instance of Mr. N. M. Penzer's bibliography of Sir Richard Burton—the descriptions of each book may be of the greatest fullness, and supplemented with a very large mass of subsidiary information, so that one entry may occupy many pages of print. On the other hand, when a vast number of entries must, for the purposes of a particular bibliography, be included in a limited space, the entries have perhaps to be reduced to one or two lines each. By far the most important modern bibliography is Messrs. Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue of English Books from 1475 to 1640*, but of this book the scope is so great that more than 26,000 entries have had to be crowded into its 600 quarto pages. The result is that the book is printed in double columns and that very few entries have more than two or three lines in their column. The entries, however, completely fulfil their purpose, which is to give a list of all the works of the period, their editions and issues, and of a limited number of English and American libraries where copies are to be found.

It is therefore clear that the creation of a standard to which all descriptions of books must conform is neither desirable nor possible. The purpose and scope of each bibliography must determine the full-

ness of the descriptions. It is, however, equally clear that certain general rules do apply to all descriptions of books. They should all, for instance, be strictly accurate (not so easy a thing to achieve as it sounds), and they should be unambiguous. Furthermore, the same standard of description should be applied to every book described in a bibliography—though I am inclined to modify the rigour of this rule by admitting that, in a bibliography where very full descriptions are normally given, it is sometimes convenient to mention a book which is only remotely connected, perhaps, with the subject in hand, and which may certainly be let off with lighter treatment than its neighbours. Even in bibliography pedantry should give way to common sense !

With these general considerations in mind, let us now proceed to consider the customs and conventions of book description.

The most primitive form of book description with which the collector is likely to have to deal is that which is to be found in the catalogues of most of the smaller second-hand booksellers. This consists usually only of the author's name, the title of the book (usually in an abbreviated form), some remarks as to illustrations (if there are any), the size of the book, some note of the binding, the date, and the price asked for it. It will be seen at once that a description of this sort may be a most misleading thing. I open a small catalogue, which lies on my desk as I write, and pick out at random the following entry :—

Gay (J.) *Fables, many quaint copperplates*, 12mo, calf gilt, 1769.  
3s. 6d.

Such an entry is remarkably uninformative, and may easily be misleading. It might, for instance, refer to any of several editions, supposing (as is quite likely) that more than one duodecimo edition of Gay's *Fables*, illustrated with copper plates, was dated 1769. Further, to a reader totally unacquainted with the history of Gay's *Fables*, the entry might equally well refer to a first edition or to a hundredth. Furthermore, brief as the description is, it contains one word that is vague ("many") and another ("quaint") which, though it may possibly add to the book's chances of finding a purchaser, certainly adds nothing to the accuracy of the reader's mental picture of the appearance of the volume. It is evident therefore that, though such a description as this may serve the bookseller's immediate purpose fairly well (and from the frequency with which this sort of description is used we must assume that it does so), something much more accurate is needed if book description is to be treated as an exact science. Let us turn, therefore, to a consideration of this more accurate something.

When compiling bibliographies of books by particular authors I have found the following method of description answer fairly well. It is not so full of detail as are the descriptions in a few bibliographies, but it is full enough for most ordinary purposes, and more complicated, as well as simpler, forms of description can easily be evolved from it. With the general arrangement of a bibliography we are not here concerned, what we are dealing with is the individual entry.

The first thing to be written down is the title of the book, or rather not merely the title, but the whole of what is printed on the title-page, together with an indication of the presence of any printer's ornaments, rules (*i.e.*, ornaments which are in the form of plain lines, running across, or part-way across, the page) or other peculiarities, and an indication of the manner in which all this is laid out on the page. This last point might seem to be one of some difficulty, but it is accomplished by treating each line as a separate unit, and marking the end of each line by an upright, or diagonal, stroke, whereby the reader is enabled to get a very fair idea of the general appearance of the title-page. Let us take a very simple imaginary instance and suppose that we have before us a book whose title-page looks like this :—

THE BEE.

By  
J. SMITH.

LONDON :  
JONES & Co., LTD.

1927.

This would be transcribed in a bibliography thus :—

The Bee. / By / J. Smith. / London : / Jones & Co., Ltd. / 1927. /

And this would tell anyone looking into the bibliography that the title-page was without any kind of ornament, that its contents were divided into six lines, and what words were in each of those lines. The reader would not be able to know from this transcription the exact spacing of the title-page, nor the various kinds and sizes of type used. But he would know at least that no part of the page was printed in italics, for it is usual to retain italics in the transcription in any places in which they occur in the original title-page. Moreover, he would know that every word at least began with a capital letter, for it is customary to retain initial capitals and initial lower-case letters in all transcriptions of this kind. It is quite clear, however, that an even greater amount of information (*e.g.*, whether a whole word is in capitals or not) might be conveyed by a slight expansion of this method.

But the title-page to be transcribed may very often be much more complicated than the one I have imagined to suit my purpose as a preliminary illustration. It may, for instance, have on it a printer's ornament. In such a case, when the bibliographer has transcribed the words of the title-page down as far as the point at which the ornament occurs, he simply writes the word ornament within square brackets, thus :—

[Ornament]



Similarly, if he has to record a "rule" or a "short rule" (generally speaking a "rule" runs right across the page or nearly so, but a "short rule" goes only across a portion of it), he writes [Rule] or [Short rule] as the case may be. Of course he must treat any such ornament, rule or short rule, as the equivalent of a line of type, and must put an upright or diagonal stroke after the closing of the brackets.

In transcription of title-pages, and, indeed, throughout the whole of a bibliographical description, square brackets indicate that the words included are not to be found in the original, but are supplied by the bibliographer. For instance, when a gathering is referred to as "[A]," it means that it is the gathering which one would expect to be signed A, but that, in fact, it is not so signed. When a page is referred to as "p. [45]," the meaning is that the page is that which one would expect to find numbered 45, but that, as a matter of fact, it is not so numbered. Similarly, when we find "[Ornament]" in the middle of the transcription of a title-page, we know that this is merely the bibliographer's interjected intimation that at this point there is an ornament on the title-page. Some bibliographers always write their interjected remarks, not only in square brackets, but also in italics. There does not, however, seem to be any good reason for this. The object, no doubt, is to avoid confusion with words which do actually occur printed within square brackets on the title-page itself; but such words may just as well be printed in italic as in roman type, so that such possibility of confusion as exists

with one method exists also with the other. In fact, however, the likelihood of any misunderstanding on the reader's part is almost *nil*, since the bibliographer's explanatory remarks are purely descriptive in character, and are, moreover, words which are most unlikely to be printed within square brackets on any title-page. Consider, for example, the following transcription of the title-page of a not uncommon eighteenth-century play :—

The / Sister : / A / Comedy. / [Rule.] / By Mrs. Charlotte Lennox. / [Rule. Ornament. Double rule.] / London, / Printed for J. Dodsley, in Pall-Mall ; and / T. Davies, in Russel-Street, Covent-Garden. / MDCCLXIX. / [Price One Shilling and Six Pence.] /

Now in this transcription there are three passages within square brackets, and each of them is printed in roman type. Yet there is no possible confusion, for common sense makes all clear. In the second for instance it is clear that the bibliographer has put in something in square brackets in order to explain that below the name of the authoress there is a printer's rule across the page ; that below that there is an ornament, and that below that there is a double rule (*i.e.*, two rules close together) before the word "London" occurs. The third passage in square brackets is a statement of the price of the play. It is obvious that the bibliographer would never interpose such a piece of non-descriptive information into a transcription of a title-page, and that, therefore, the words "Price One Shilling and Six Pence" occur within square brackets on the title-page itself. The chances of confusion are negligible here, as in every instance of the sort that I have met.

Having transcribed the title-page, the next thing for us to do is to start a fresh paragraph, in which the size of the book is set out. This need consist of only a very few words. First, when we have satisfied ourselves how the paper on which the book is printed is folded, we put down "folio," "quarto," "octavo," "octavo in half-sheets," or whatever it is that our investigation discloses to us. Some people may consider this information enough upon this point, but usually in a fairly full description it is considered well to supplement the plain "folio" or "quarto" somewhat. This may be done by the use of the technical terms "crown octavo," "elephant folio" and the like, which are given in Chapter II of this book. But even these terms are not exact, and, moreover, it is not easy to carry in one's head the measurements of a sheet of "crown," or other paper. I have, therefore, myself always preferred to give the measurements of the leaves of the book, which I am describing, by way of qualification. But, when this is done, it is clear that some statement must be added as to whether the measurements refer to a "cut" or "uncut" copy. Wherever possible the measurements should be those of an uncut copy (unless, of course, the description is that of a particular copy of a book, and not of the edition as a whole <sup>1</sup>); but when no uncut copy is to be found, those of the most lightly-cut available copy may be given. The second paragraph of our

<sup>1</sup> It is obvious that this method of description may be needed either for compiling a *catalogue* of a particular collection of books, or for making a *bibliography* of a group of books treated, as it were, in the abstract, and that, therefore, details must be varied to suit particular purposes.

description may therefore run something like this :—

Duodecimo. Uncut copy in British Museum measures  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$  ins.

Or :—

Octavo in half-sheets. Good average cut copy measures  $7\frac{3}{4} \times 5$  ins.

Or, again, if we wish to treat a very rare book rather more fully :—

Octavo in half-sheets. The only copy of the first edition I have seen was somewhat closely cut and measured  $7\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{7}{8}$  ins. If one may judge from later editions an uncut copy should measure  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 6$  inches.

It will be seen that in the last instance the border between fact and conjecture has been crossed—as it sometimes may be, quite properly, supposing that the conjecture serves a useful purpose and is not disguised as a fact.

After dealing thus with the size of the book we must pass on to the closely-allied matter of signatures, and in the third paragraph of the description these are enumerated. To do this it is not necessary to mention every signature separately. It is enough merely to indicate the general run of signatures, together with any places in which the ordinary sequence is departed from. Thus this entry, for a normal octavo volume might run thus :—

Signatures :—A to M in eights.

This is intended to convey to the reader that the sections are signed in a consecutive sequence from

A to M and that each signature contains eight leaves. In making this record the bibliographer, of course, has in mind the fact that the sequence A to M in signatures means that the book is in twelve sections or gatherings, and not in thirteen, since printers in signing books treat I and J as one letter (see p. 23, *ante*). Some bibliographers therefore amplify their statement and write it in the following form for the sake of extra clarity :—

Signatures :—A to M (twelve gatherings) in eights.

This, however, is a point that may be left for decision to the preference of the individual writer.

A somewhat shorter way of indicating the sequence of signatures in a book is by means of writing a small raised figure after the last signature to indicate the number of leaves in each preceding gathering. When this way is followed the signatures in the same octavo which I have just quoted would be described quite simply thus :—

A—M<sup>8</sup>.

This is, of course, a completely accurate, and very concise, form in which to give the desired information. When space is a matter of first consideration, this is certainly the form which should be adopted ; when, however, the bibliographer is not so much cramped for space, I am inclined to think a longer, more *wordy*, form is better, since the more entries consist of mere letters and figures the more easily does the mind become bemused in proof correcting, or in other checking of the entry, and the more likely is it that errors will occur. This is a matter to which I shall revert later.

Not all books consist of an unbroken series of similar gatherings, but the same method of description fits them all and only needs to be applied with a little common sense. Let us suppose that a quarto book which we are describing consists of four unsigned leaves, followed by a series of signatures in fours beginning with B and ending with F, and that it concludes with signature G consisting of only two leaves. We should describe this sequence thus :—

[A] and B—F in fours. G two leaves.

The square brackets round the A indicate that though the sheet actually bears no signature yet from its position in the series of signatures we may call it A for convenience of reference.

In this paragraph I have usually found it convenient to record any unusual point or points in the folding of the sheets of the book. For instance, the first edition (quarto, 1761, misdated 1661) of John Armstrong's poem *A Day* begins with three unsigned leaves, then continues with two gatherings of four leaves each signed B and C, and concludes with a single leaf signed D. Examination of this book, for the purpose of making a bibliography of Armstrong's works, led me to the conclusion that the first leaf of the book was really leaf D2 folded back so as to come before the two leaves of the unsigned half-sheet [A]. The signatures of this book therefore had to be expressed thus :—

[A] two leaves. B—C in fours. D two leaves, D2 being apparently folded round to make the half-title leaf before signature [A].



Varying examples of this part of the description of a book might be produced almost in hundreds. But those I have given are enough, I hope, to make the principles underlying the recording of signatures perfectly clear.

We have now dealt with the description of the title-page, of the size, and of the signatures of a book. The next paragraph of a description I have found it convenient to head with the word "Pagination," and under it it is possible to describe, with an amount of detail which may be varied according to taste, the contents of the book. The principle of this paragraph is that the bibliographer combines an enumeration of the sequence, or sequences, of numbers given to the pages of the book with some account of what is to be found printed on each page. There is scarcely any limit to what may be mentioned in this part of a book description, but in practice I have found that the following points are enough to give the reader a pretty full idea of the appearance and make-up of any book :—

The various sequences of numbering employed, and what pages are unnumbered.

The general lay-out of the preliminary matter (position of half-title, title, dedication, contents, etc.).

The general lay-out of the main text of the book, with an account of any important sub-divisions.

The position of any blank pages or leaves.

The position in which any plates, maps, or the like, are inserted.

The position of any head- or tail-pieces, illustrations in the text, rules at the heads of chapters, or other ornaments.

If, under "Pagination," all the above points are recorded, it will be found that the paragraph will, in the case of certain books, spread out to quite terrifying dimensions, and if many books have to be described in a short space it will often be necessary to omit some of the kinds of information which I have suggested for inclusion. Of these that which is, in my experience, least fruitful, and which at the same time often takes up a great deal of space, is the enumeration of the ornaments (other than *inserted* plates) of a book, and this feature may, I think, be sacrificed without much searching of heart. But, if any account at all of pagination be given, it should at the very least include a concise statement of the various series of numerals which appear on the pages. That is to say, that if a book consists of sixteen preliminary pages paged (or partly paged) in roman numerals, and 128 pages of text paged (or partly paged) in arabic numerals, the bibliographer should not simply say "Pp. 144" (*i.e.*, the sum of 16 and 128 pages), but should express it "Pp. xvi + 128," and should, moreover, if it is at all possible for him to do so, state whether there is a half-title or whether there are blank leaves at the beginning or end of the book.

But, to revert to the fuller method of describing pagination, which I suggest may be adopted usefully when space is available, the best way of making the reader understand this method will be by an illustration. Let us take first of all a simple example, that of William Collins's *Verses Humbly Address'd To Sir Thomas Hanmer*, folio, 1743. This pamphlet consists of twelve pages, the first three unnumbered

and the rest paged from 4 to 12. The pagination paragraph of this book runs very simply :—

P. [1] title ; p. [2] blank ; pp. [3] and 4-12, text, with ornaments at beginning and end. At the end of the poem are the inscription "*Oxford, Dec. 3, 1743,*" and the word "Finis." There are no catchwords on pp. 5 and 8.

This summary tells the reader how the contents of the book are divided among the different pages, and what pages are ornamented ; it also draws his attention to the date at the end of the poem, and to the fact that catchwords are missing in two places—both points which might conceivably be of importance in discriminating between the original edition and a reprint (supposing that a reprint were to be discovered). Also the fact that the word "Finis" occurs at the end of the poem is mentioned, since this makes it probable that the book, as known to the bibliographer, is complete and is not likely (so far as the author's text is concerned) to be a fragment—though, of course, the presence of such a word as "Finis" or "The End" is no evidence that blank leaves, or leaves of advertisements, were not present, originally, after the conclusion of the text.

As a slightly more complicated example of the description of the pagination of a book, I may quote that of the first edition of Charles Churchill's *An Epistle to William Hogarth*, quarto in half-sheets, 1763 :—

P. [i], half-title, "[Line of ornaments] / An / Epistle / To / William Hogarth. / [Line of ornaments] / Price Two Shillings and Sixpence." ; p. [ii], blank ; p. [iii], title ; p. [iv], blank ; pp. [1] and 2-31 text, with ornament on p. [1] and "Finis" on p. 31 ; p. [32], blank. There is no catchword on p. 12.

This summary, it will be seen, informs the reader that the book has four unnumbered pages (to which a series of numbers, written in roman numerals, is for convenience given) before the text of the poem opens. It also transcribes the wording of the half-title by the same method as is employed in transcribing title-pages. And, in addition to giving information on these two points, the paragraph also deals with many of the points explained in my previous example. The matter needs no further stressing, for the reader will see that, by the employment of the method I suggest, almost any degree of detail which may be considered desirable can be attained by the exercise of a little ingenuity and common sense.

It must also be evident to the reader that it would be quite possible to combine the information as to the contents of a book, not with the account of the pagination, but with that of the signatures. In other words, it would be possible to say, for instance, that A1 was the title-page with verso blank, and that A2 and verso were the contents, and so on. Some bibliographers follow this method, especially in rather short collations,<sup>1</sup> but I find that greater clarity is achieved, in a collation that is at all detailed, if the account of the signatures is given in a separate paragraph of its own, and that of the contents combined with the record of pagination in the manner I have suggested.

The pagination-paragraph will sometimes complete the description of a book ; but more frequently

<sup>1</sup> The collation of a book is the act of examining it and ascertaining its parts, form, etc. The word "collation," however, is commonly also used for the written record of the results of such an examination—what I have in this chapter usually called the description.

there will be further points to be dealt with which have not fitted conveniently into any of the four paragraphs which we have already considered, and which are (to recapitulate) : transcription of title-page, size, signatures, and pagination.

A further paragraph, or series of paragraphs, if necessary, may be devoted to the record of such extra information, which may be of almost any kind that is germane to the book. In these additional paragraphs should come the record of any variants noted between different copies of the edition, and any discussion as to whether such variants divide the edition into " issues " or not. If the number of copies of which the edition consisted is known, it may here be mentioned—and, indeed, as has already been said, the only limits to what may be recorded, in the paragraphs at the end of the description of a printed book, are those which common sense will suggest to any person who has an appreciation of that valuable commodity.

Perhaps it will be convenient if I here give, as it were by way of recapitulation, a complete description of a book. This I do not offer as a perfect model for all to follow, but merely as a whole example of the method which I have described, and of which fragmentary examples have been given. The description of Dodsley's somewhat uninspired tragedy of *Cleone* has been selected for the illustration, because it is not too long, yet illustrates a fair number of the points with which a bibliographer may be called upon to deal.

Cleone. / A / Tragedy. / As it is Acted at the / Theatre  
Royal / In / Covent-Garden. / Written by R. Dodsley. /



*Præcipe lugubres* / *Cantus*, Melpomene. Hor. / [Dodsley's Monogram] / London : / Printed for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall-mall. / MDCCLVIII. / [Price One Shilling and Sixpence.] /

Octavo in half-sheets. An average cut copy measures  $7\frac{7}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{4}$  ins.

Signatures :—[A] and B—M in fours. N two leaves.

Pagination :—P. [i], title ; p. [ii], blank ; p. [iii], "Advertisement" ; p. [iv], blank ; pp. [v] and [vi], letter of dedication to Lord Chesterfield, with ornament at head ; pp. [vii] and [viii], "Prologue. By William Melmoth, Esq.," with ornament at head and rule at end ; p. [ix], "Persons of the Drama" ; pp. [1] and 2—80, text of "*Cleone*," with ornaments on pp. [1], 21, 36, 52 and 67 ; pp. [81] and 82, "Epilogue. By a Friend," with ornaments at head and tail ; pp. 83—91, text of "*Melpomene*. . . An Ode," with "Finis" on p. 91 ; p. [92] blank.

The Epilogue is by William Shenstone.

*Cleone* was first acted on December 2, 1758, and ran sixteen nights.

The first edition consisted of 2,000 copies. Some copies have not the price printed on the title-page.

It will be observed that this example illustrates the fact that this method of description is flexible and capable of dealing clearly with any little point that arises, and seems to need special mention ; for instance, this description makes it clear that the Prologue occupies p. [vii] and part of p. [viii], and that the list of "Persons of the Drama" has not a page to itself, but occurs, after the end of the Prologue, at the foot of p. [viii]. I do not say that this particular point is of vast importance, but it is the sort of thing which one may want to be able to make perfectly clear in a description.

The reader will also perceive that this description of *Cleone* could easily be expanded, if it were desired



to do so, and that it could, on the other hand, also be contracted down to some such brief form as the following :—

Cleone. A Tragedy. By R. Dodsley. R. and J. Dodsley.  
MDCCLVIII. 8vo. [A]<sup>4</sup>. B—M<sup>4</sup>. N<sup>2</sup>. Pp. [viii] + 92.  
2 variants—with, and without, price on title-page.

This, within the limits of what it attempts, is just as accurate as, though it is less fully informative than, the longer form ; and accuracy is, indeed, the chief quality to be aimed at in any book-description—long or short. Accuracy is, however, by no means easy to achieve (as I have learned by sad experience), and in deciding upon what method he shall adopt the bibliographer should remember two things : (1) that each additional statement he includes in his description is an additional opportunity for him to make a mistake ; and (2) that it is more difficult to check correctly long lists of figures, letters and other symbols, than it is to check the same information stated in words. Therefore it is wise not to include any piece, or kind, of information in a description, unless it is fairly clear that there is something definitely to be gained by doing so. Further, it is unwise (unless limitations of space make it absolutely necessary) to make your description look like a quotation from a book of mathematical tables ; the mind “ instinctively retires ” from the contemplation of a mass of symbols and figures, and you will find that it is not easy always to combine the maximum of conciseness with the maximum of accuracy. A slight loquacity of statement will often enable a bibliographer to perceive mistakes that might otherwise escape his notice.

In connection with this matter of accuracy, there is another thing that must be mentioned, and this is that it is always easier to describe accurately a book which one can examine in the quiet and privacy of one's own study. To examine a book in a public library, or even in the library of a friend, is to do so under conditions which incline one to haste, and therefore to the making of errors. Further than that, it is only after prolonged and (may I add?) loving handling and examination, that the problems which a book presents will state themselves clearly to the student's mind. So that it is always better (though it is not, alas, always possible) to describe a book, in the first instance, from a copy in one's own possession, and then to compare other copies, situated in public libraries or where not, with the description which one has already made.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FORMATION OF A COLLECTION

IN the first chapter of this book the opinion was expressed that a collection of books should not be merely a shapeless agglomeration of miscellaneous volumes, but should have an idea informing it, and giving it grace and symmetry, as the bones give grace and symmetry to the body. What the idea, round which a collection should pivot, should be is not a thing which may be dictated to any man. Further than that, few men, I believe, when they begin to collect books, have a clear notion of the library they intend to form. They begin to buy the books they want immediately to read or to refer to, or they buy an odd volume or two that, for some quaintness, appeals to their idle curiosity—"for," as King Henry VIII. remarked—

" idleness  
Is chief mistress  
Of vices all,"

even of indiscriminate book buying. It is only after a chance purchase has interested its buyer deeply, or after some accident has revealed to him how one book may throw light upon another, and the two cry out to be joined on the shelf by a third and a fourth, their near kindred, that the casual

purchaser of miscellaneous books realises, perhaps in a sudden flash, what a library he may create for himself if he will only take the direction of his buying out of the hands of chance and into his own. He then, if he has the true spirit of the book collector in him, sees a vision of a collection which shall be a balanced and well-articulated thing, or, to use another simile, a group of lenses so focussed as to make clear to the eye every aspect of some object in the storehouse of knowledge. When this realisation has come to the collector, he is a happy man, a man with a purpose, a man who sees what it is he has so long been groping after. What shall be the idea that eventually fires the collector's mind it is impossible to say ; and it would be foolish to try to force any individual fancy in any particular direction. On the other hand, there is no harm in pointing out to the book-buyer, who is still in the promiscuous stage, that, while for the present he may "sip every flower, and change every hour," yet one day he must find a flower in which "every charm is united."

Further, it may be pointed out to the collector that if he chooses to form his library round a subject that is little understood, and has been studied by comparatively few people, he will make his book-collecting all the more useful and—what is more—he will in all probability find it easier (unless his subject be one of extreme obscurity) to find books to interest him and to fill his shelves. And, after all, it is not much fun collecting books, if one cannot find the books one wishes to collect. Those who first studied early English printed books could enjoy themselves greatly in collecting them ; for Caxtons and

Pynsons were then to be found in the bookshops at prices which were within the reach of the man of average means. Yet to-day it would be but dull work searching for such things, and hope deferred would soon have its proverbial effect. Bustard shooting on Salisbury Plain may have been excellent sport a century ago—but, since the bustard is there no more, this sport is to-day somewhat less alluring, and the sportsman is considerably happier after partridges.

But enough as to choice of subject. Let us suppose the subject chosen, and chosen not too ambitiously. Where is the collector to find the books he wishes to acquire?

There are four main kinds of institution at which books may be brought. Bookshops which deal in new books; bookshops which deal in old or second-hand books; bookstalls; and auction sales. It may be useful to consider the way in which each of these is to be used by the collector of books.

The uses of the shop which sells new books may, perhaps, seem too obvious to need enumeration; and, indeed, they need not detain us long. The function of such a shop is to be able to supply any book which its publisher still has “in print”—that is to say any book of which its publisher still has a stock of unsold copies. Sometimes also another class of book is dealt in—the “remainder,” which is neither a book that is still in print, nor a second-hand book, but something between the two. To be exact, “remainders” are new copies of books which have not sold so readily as was expected at their original published price, with the result that the

publisher has sold off at a very low price the whole of his remaining stock, which is then said to have been "remaindered." Bookshops which offer remainders can therefore very often sell them at a price so low as even to be below the cost of production ; and since it is not always the least deserving books that have failed to find purchasers, it is sometimes possible to make very welcome additions to one's library by the judicious purchase of "remainders." While I am on the subject of remainders, I may, perhaps, mention one fact in connection with them that is of some interest to collectors. It is this—that remaindered copies of a book very frequently differ in binding from the ordinary copies of the same edition, and the reason for the difference is that the publisher only bound, or cased, in his original binding, or casing, a portion of the edition printed. When, therefore, he decides to cut his losses by remaindering the unsold copies of the book, he probably also decides to put them into a somewhat cheaper binding or casing than was originally given to the edition. Differences which may be observed between the bindings of two or more copies of the same book (I am speaking now, of course, of more or less modern books which have not been rebound) are often to be explained by the fact that part of the edition was remaindered.

This, however, is a digression, and I must return to the shop that sells new books. Its functions I have already spoken of in a general way, but how is the book collector, as opposed to the casual buyer of books, especially affected by this kind of bookshop ? The answer is that he may be so in several



ways. If he is a collector of the first editions of some living writer, it will naturally be through the dealer in current books that the collector orders a copy of each of his author's books as it appears ; but of the collecting of modern first editions I will say no more here, for I must refer to it later at more length. At the opposite end of the scale even the collector of the most ancient books cannot entirely neglect the first-hand bookshop, for to it he must go for any current books, dealing with his subject, which he may need, and for any new editions of the old authors whom he studies. However antique be the general tenor of one's library, one cannot keep the new books out of it altogether — and, indeed, an attempt to do so comes either of foolishness or of perversity.

Yet new books, it must be admitted, do not bring with them quite the joy that accompanies the acquisition of old books, and the collector's chief business will be with the several kinds of second-hand bookseller—a tribe which is perhaps more various than any other, for it includes every grade between the university man with a high degree and the completely illiterate individual who opens or shuts his bookshop just as the public-houses do the opposite. Yet various as the tribe is, it may be divided roughly into two main sections<sup>1</sup>: those who charge Bond Street prices, and those who do not. There are, naturally, some border-line cases, but, on the whole, the division works out as well as most divisions of the kind. Moreover, there is, from the book-

<sup>1</sup> This remark is made, of course, especially with regard to the English second-hand booksellers.

seller's point of view, more sense and justice in the distinction than is at first obvious.

At first sight it might appear that there is no good reason why a book should cost one price in one shop and another price in another—which is actually the case with a very large number of books. The most valuable books do not thus vary in price with the geographical situation of their vendors, a first folio or a Mazarin Bible would cost as much in Clapham (supposing either of those books happened to be there) as in a street off Piccadilly ; and similarly, there are some books that are valueless wherever they may be. But a very large number of books have two prices—and the reason is this, that the two kinds of bookshop are conducted upon two different principles, and really, though individual books which each of them sells may be the same, offer their customers two totally different services.

Consider, first of all, the bookshop in a suburb of London. Rents are moderately cheap there, perhaps, and that gives our suburban bookseller some initial advantage. This, however, is not all. He does not get a large number of wealthy collectors coming past his door, and he cannot therefore cater to any great extent for rich connoisseurs. He lives largely by a postal trade in moderately-priced books, by sales to chance customers and to any local bibliophiles there may be, and by sales to other dealers. His livelihood depends, not on the sale of a limited number of especially rare or beautiful volumes, but on the turnover of a large number of books on each of which he makes a small profit. He buys his books usually in bundles at auction sales,

or arranges privately to buy libraries of comparatively minor importance from their owners. He specialises in no particular kind of book—except, perhaps, incidentally, and in a hap-hazard sort of way—and all is fish that comes to his net. To some extent, indeed, his shop is a sorting-house for the less valuable second-hand books, and, in so far as a large proportion of his trade is done with other booksellers, he is a middleman. His business is to acquire a miscellaneous collection of books, to sort out those books for which there is a possible sale, to know where to dispose of them quickly, to get rid of the absolute rubbish (probably to the paper-mills for pulping), and to have his space free as soon as possible to deal similarly with another lot of books. He will not, of course, sell a book, for which he knows that there is, or may be, a possible purchaser somewhere, at a loss ; and so he does in time accumulate a stock. But his aim is to get rid of every book he buys, as quickly as he can, at a price which will ensure him a reasonable living.

It is clear then that such a bookseller cannot offer his customers anything very elaborate in the way of service. The catalogues which he issues contain but the briefest descriptions, ignoring the finer bibliographical points altogether, and usually nothing is said about the condition of the books except a general statement that “unless otherwise stated, the books here catalogued are in fair second-hand condition.” Obviously, therefore, it is difficult to be sure of what one is buying from such a shop, and obviously, also, it is not fair to return a book to such a bookseller unless it is actually misdescribed in the

catalogue or is flagrantly incomplete or remarkably dirty. But the chief point about this kind of bookseller is that he deals mainly in the books that chance to come his way, and does not make special efforts to keep regularly in stock books upon any particular subject or subjects. Of this type are most of the London booksellers whose shops are in the suburbs or in the poorer districts, and most of the provincial booksellers too. It should be added, however, that many of these shops, though doing the sort of general business I have described, also do a specialised trade in books referring especially to their own localities. If, for example, the collector is looking for some book relating to the antiquities of the county of Devonshire, it is probable that he will be able to find it by writing to the bookshops at Exeter or Plymouth.

The activities of what I may call the West End bookseller are very different from these. His function it is to deal in good copies of rare or otherwise notable books, each of which has been carefully examined by himself, or by an expert assistant, with a view to the discovery of any peculiarities or imperfections. Moreover, he is a specialist who reckons to be able to show to visiting customers a representative selection of books of the kind in which he specialises ; and one may say that the greater the bookseller the greater the number of subjects on which his shop has a specialised stock of books. Now, for a bookseller to carry a large stock of choice books means that he keeps a book a longer average time on his shelves, before he sells it, than does the less ambitious dealer who stocks whatever books

fortune chances to send him and sells them off as quickly as possible. This clearly means that the West End dealer must put up the price of his wares, and the higher rent that he has to pay for his premises means the same thing. There are other factors, too, that tend to increase prices in these shops—one is the care exercised in arrangement of stock so that any book can be found at a moment's notice ; another is the greater fullness with which the books are described in the catalogues ; and yet another is the fact that a really important bookshop does not buy large miscellaneous collections of books, good and bad, but tends rather to acquire its books separately, or at least in comparatively small and well-chosen collections, so that it pays on the average more for them.

Therefore he who buys books from one of the great dealers must expect to pay more for them—yet, at the same time, he does, by spending the extra money, get something more than he would in a cheaper, more haphazard shop. In the first place he can reasonably insist on the book being in a very fine state of completeness and cleanliness. But more important than that is the fact that, by applying to a great specialist bookseller, one can usually get any reasonably common book, which one may happen to want in a hurry, at once ; and, moreover, that one may very possibly be offered several copies to choose from. There are shops, for instance, which one may visit with a good hope of finding a particular Restoration, or eighteenth-century, poetical tract of which one needs a copy at once ; there are other shops which have always available large numbers of



old scientific books ; and there are others which specialise in the works of the great Victorian novelists. Such a bookshop offers to the student and to the collector a service which is very valuable, which it costs the bookseller money to maintain, and which is quite rightly charged for in the price asked for the books, especially for the books of secondary importance.

It is true that less reasonable considerations than these sometimes affect the price of books. I have been told by two important booksellers, quite independently the one of the other, that there are collectors so foolish that they will not buy a book at all unless they are asked a good stiff price for it—they feel, I suppose, that if it is not worth a lot of money it is not worth buying. Who, then, shall blame the dealer if he prefers rather to sell a book at an inflated price than to keep it on his shelves at a fair one ? Yet such lunacy is, I trust, not common, and I hope that I have said enough to show that it is only reasonable that there should be, in different bookshops, different standards of price—the reason being that they are not really selling the same thing.

Before we pass on to consider how the collector should avail himself of the services of the two kinds of bookshop a word must be said about their poor relation, the book-stall—but really there is only a very little that can be said about stalls. Undoubtedly, searching for books on the stalls in some market-place is the pleasantest of all forms of book collecting—on a fine day. The mere fact of being in the open air is an attraction, and, since the book-stall is usually the humblest form of bookshop, and



its stock in consequence that which has been left over after the demands of its more exalted relatives have been satisfied, any little trifle that one may pick up there has for its buyer an added charm from its surroundings. But there is, in my experience, not a very great deal to be found on the bookstalls. In London the greatest number of stalls is to be found in the Farringdon Road, about ten minutes' walk from Ludgate Circus, and there are others in other parts of London, and in some provincial markets ; but I have never found on any of them anything in the nature of a bibliographical treasure, though I have in my library a dozen or two agreeable books for which I must thank the bookstalls. Usually, however, an hour spent among the stalls has proved nothing but an hour pleasantly wasted ; and one reason for this, I think, is that the bookstalls are regularly searched, as soon as the stock is set out upon them, by eagle-eyed individuals who earn a scanty living by picking up from the stalls anything that might be attractive in a bookshop.

To these remarks on bookstalls I must, however, make one exception (and there may be others that are unknown to me), the admirable stall conducted for so long in Cambridge market-place by Mr. David. It is no part of my duty here to give free advertisements to anybody, but in personal gratitude I must mention the name of the man from whom all my earliest purchases of old books were made—the first being a tattered *Hudibras* which I bought when I visited Cambridge from school to do my “ Little go.” David’s stall is more than a stall, it is a bookshop conducted in the open air, and numbering

many distinguished scholars among its customers. On this stall, at least, really fine and rare books were, in my day, to be had, and I doubt not things are still the same.

But, to revert to bookshops, how is the collector to make full use of the different types of shop that exist? Surely the sensible course for him to follow is to begin by frequenting the less ambitious and less expensive shops, for by so doing he will see a very large number of books, and will begin to learn which of the books he wishes to collect are common. These he may buy as the basis of his collection, and he will certainly learn a great deal about his subject in the process of so doing. It may be that what he learns is merely negative; if he is searching for Elizabethan plays he will probably not be long in realising that his quarry is not there—except perhaps for a modern reprint or two which he may think fit to buy. But in any event he will begin to get a feeling for what classes of books are common and what rare, and, if his subject be one which includes both rare and common books, he will be able to buy many of the latter at very small expense. Of course, if he is lucky enough to be ahead of his time, and to be searching for a kind of book which no one else wants, he will be able to find not only his common books, but also his rarities, in the cheaper bookshops, and all at equally low prices; he will then know to the full the joys of the pioneer.

As time goes on, however, the collector will find that his visits to suburban and provincial booksellers, which were at first productive, become less and less so, and that certain much-desired books

continue to elude him. Now is the time when, if he is to add to his collection, he must see what the more important booksellers can do for him. This is the turning-point in the careers of many book collectors, for they have to face the fact that, if they are to add materially to their collections, it will now cost them not shillings, but guineas, to fill each gap on their shelves. Yet, let us suppose that they decide to take the plunge and to adventure after the costlier game ; they will be surprised to find how much money they have saved by their searches in the humbler shops, and they will, moreover, enter the doors of the great specialised bookshop with a good working knowledge of their subject, and knowing also what books it is that they wish to buy. In other words, they will be in a position to appreciate, and use wisely, the particular services which (as I have endeavoured to show) it is the function of the greater book-dealers to provide.

A bookshop may either be visited personally by the collector or may be used through the post. The former is much the more pleasurable and satisfactory method when it is possible, but it is often impracticable to visit a particular bookshop. The shop may be situated hundreds, even thousands, of miles away, or the collector may be a busy man who is unable to spare time during business hours to indulge his hobby. It may, therefore, become necessary to know one's bookshop only through the catalogues which it issues ; and buying from catalogues is never very satisfactory. In the first place it very frequently happens that a book which one orders is sold before one's order reaches the shop ;

and in this connection it is worth remarking that so many people read a catalogue that it is wise to look through a bookseller's list as soon as it arrives, and to write immediately, or even, in the case of a book one desires very much, to telegraph, giving one's order. Sometimes, when I have been greatly excited by some item in a catalogue from a London shop, I have jumped immediately and extravagantly into a taxi, been driven to the shop, and even then, alas ! have sometimes found my book gone. Once, however, by this means I succeeded in getting a rare early tract by Dr. Johnson for only 7s. 6d. It was an uncut copy of the *Marmor Norfolciense*, and the dealer had catalogued it among topographical works under the sub-heading *Norfolk*—but I wander.

Another disadvantage of postal buying is that it is not always possible to be certain what one is ordering, or what sort of condition it is in. On this point it is to be remembered that the better is the firm with which one is dealing, the more accurate are the descriptions in its catalogues, and the better is the average condition of its books. The custom of the trade is, however, that if a book is found to differ materially from the description in the catalogue, or to be imperfect, the buyer is at liberty to return it to the seller, providing that the return is made within a reasonable time (say two or three days) of the receipt of the book. Yet, even so, and allowing for the fact that reputable dealers will always treat a customer reasonably and fairly, it is always more satisfactory to see a book before buying it if it is possible to do so. It perhaps hardly needs saying that booksellers are only too pleased to send their

catalogues to anyone who will ask them to do so ; it is probably more necessary to add the warning that, before one has been collecting very long, catalogues begin to arrive in such vast numbers that the best part of one's life might easily be given to perusing them.

One of the most valuable services a bookseller can render is to help his clients to find particular books of which they are in need. The book trade in England, at least, is very well organised for this part of its job, for there is a weekly paper, the *Clique*, which circulates among professional booksellers, and which is largely given up to lists of books required by various firms. The method of finding a particular book is therefore simple ; one goes to a likely bookseller and asks him if he has it ; if so, well and good ; if not, one asks him to try to get a copy. This means that he will insert an advertisement for the book in the *Clique*, and that any bookseller who happens to have a copy will write to him saying how much he wants for it. By this means it is usually possible to obtain any out-of-print book, if it is not very rare, or very obscure, within ten days or a fortnight.

Not much more need, I think, be said about book-shops—except this : that they do exist to sell books and to earn a living for their proprietors. Do not trespass too much on a bookseller's time and good nature, however kind and agreeable he may be, but, if you frequent his shop, at least occasionally buy a book from him. And, even more important than that, treat his books with care and respect—do not drop them about, or break their backs, or let cigarette



ash fall upon them. The books, remember, are not yours until you have paid for them.

There remains for discussion one more place in which books may be bought by the collector—the auction room ; and the buying and selling of books at auction is a matter which deserves a little consideration in this place. In London there are two firms of auctioneers who hold sales of books regularly between the months of October and July ; there are other firms in London that hold occasional sales, and there are fairly regular auctions of books in Edinburgh, Dublin and some of the big provincial cities. All these sales are conducted by firms who have some knowledge of books and their values ; but, in addition, many books are sold, usually as part of the contents of a house, by country auctioneers who know nothing of books, and who are quite incompetent to secure to their clients a fair price for their libraries.

In London the principal book-auctions are not attended by very many private collectors ; the sales are not, indeed, so arranged as to be convenient for the collector, unless he happens to be a man of leisure, for they take place in the middle of the day, beginning, as a rule, at one o'clock in the afternoon. In New York, on the other hand, sales are timed to suit the amateur buyer, and take place in the evening, with, I believe, the result that many more private individuals attend the sales there than do so here. Be that as it may, in London, certainly, nine out of every ten bidders are professional dealers ; very few collectors appear in person at the auctions, and when they do appear they are frequently merely onlookers



who commission a dealer to bid on their behalf for any books they may want. This is, I think, a pity, but it is the case, and the private bidder is at something of a disadvantage at an auction sale. For one thing, some dealers are apt to resent the intrusion of a stranger into what they regard as their own preserve, and they will for that reason bid against him, not because they particularly want the book, but because they want to make the intruder pay dearly for what he buys. Again, it is unwise for anyone well known as a collector of books to bid in person, for his presence may very well send up the price of the book he is after. Suppose, for instance, that a collector, known to possess an almost complete collection of the works of Alexander Pope, is observed to be bidding for a bundle of early eighteenth-century tracts which do not appear to be of any special importance. This is enough to notify every bookseller in the room that, since the collector is not likely to be in want of any common or valueless book, there is almost certainly a rare Pope pamphlet in the bundle. Therefore it is highly probable that several of them will start bidding for this lot, simply because Mr. Z., the well-known collector, is obviously anxious to get it. This is not merely a flight of imagination on my part; such things do, in fact, occur, and one of the most famous English bibliophiles told me that he had been run up from a few shillings to nearly twenty pounds for a bundle of books by a dealer who afterwards came up and asked him what there was especially interesting in the lot!

Far be it from me to discourage private collectors from buying at auctions; indeed, a collector who

knows what he is after, and who is not known to specialise in very rare and valuable books, may often add very cheaply to his library by buying judiciously and not too obtrusively at sales. At the same time there are occasions on which it is wiser to commission a dealer, or the auctioneer himself, to bid on one's behalf. A dealer, after all, looks at books as merchandise, worth so much and no more, and, since it is impossible to know whether he is bidding for a customer or on his own account, no rival is likely to run him up, just for the fun of the thing, to above the book's fair value.

In connection with the sale of books at auction some mention must be made of a thing which is fairly often referred to, but of which the working is not understood by the general public—"the Ring." "The Ring" is an association of persons who agree not to make more than a pretence of bidding against each other at a sale, but afterwards to pool their purchases, re-auction them privately, and divide the profit (that is, the difference between the prices fetched at the public and private auctions) equally among themselves. By this means they recover part of what they have to pay for a book, which part, of course, diminishes both the price received by the seller of the books and the legitimate profits of the auctioneer, who is paid by a percentage (usually  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.) of the sum realised at the auction. The second, and private, auction, held among the members of "the Ring," is known as a "Knock-out."

The existence of "the Ring" is sometimes defended on the ground that it is only fair that those

who have knowledge should be able to use it so as to profit by it to the fullest extent ; but it is hard to resist the conclusion that "the Ring" is not a legitimate form of combination, that it is, indeed, morally in the category of conspiracies to defraud. Happily "the Ring" cannot, in a great city like London, operate to more than a limited extent. The facts are hard to establish, and could they be established, it would possibly prove libellous to print them in any detail ; but it is rumoured that in the London auction rooms "the Ring" comprises some half-a-dozen firms only. Obviously, therefore, there will be present at every auction of books a large number of dealers, and a few private purchasers, who are outside "the Ring," and who will certainly not allow its members to appropriate books at a ridiculously low figure. In London, then, we can feel sure that a book will fetch something approaching its full auction value.

At sales held in country places affairs are, however, very different. There the seller may have to contend not only with the handicap of an ignorant auctioneer, but with that of a "Ring" which may include almost every buyer in the room ; for it is—so I am informed—the custom that any bookseller who attends a country sale may claim admittance to "the Ring" at that sale.<sup>1</sup> The result is that sometimes really valuable books are sold by country auctioneers for sums that are not one-tenth of their real value. It is said that at one famous, or perhaps I should say notorious, sale held in the country

<sup>1</sup> Certain booksellers, it is only fair to explain, make a point of never entering a "Ring."

within the last ten years, one hundred dealers arrived and formed themselves into a "Ring," and that at the "knock-out" which followed the public sale the profit divided amounted to £80 per dealer. In other words, the owner of the books, because he was foolish enough to allow them to be sold in an out-of-the-way country place, was defrauded of £8,000. What adds a touch of humour to the situation is that it is said that certain small dealers never troubled to attend the sale at all, but, after a pleasant afternoon in a public-house, went to the "knock-out" only, and collected their £80 apiece without so much as touching a single book ! But even this was not all—certain barrow-men, owners of humble bookstalls, arrived at the sale and tried to obtain admittance to the Ring ; they were, however, not considered worthy of equality with those who, even if they did not buy any books, at least owned bookshops, and they were given £15 apiece to go away and not cause any trouble. As I have said, the facts of a case of this sort are very difficult to discover with certainty, but I was given the above particulars by one who ought to know what happened, and I believe them to be, in essence, true.

This chapter is supposed—if its heading is to be believed—to be devoted to advice on the acquisition of books, but book auctions in general, and especially the anecdote just given, seem to indicate that the present is a fitting place in which to insert a few sentences on the allied subject of how to sell books—not, of course, as a profession. Books may be sold either directly by the owner to a dealer, or through an auctioneer. Each method has its peculiar advan-

tages. By selling direct to a bookseller the seller gets the whole of the money offered to him, and gets it at once ; whereas, by selling through a firm of auctioneers, he gets the price fetched, less the  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. which the auctioneer takes, and there is also often a slight delay in the final settling of the accounts of an auction, partly owing to the fact that books are not infrequently returned by their buyers to the auctioneers because of some imperfection to which attention was not drawn in the catalogue. On the other hand the seller, if he disperses his books through a competent firm of auctioneers, may feel confident that he is obtaining a fair price for them, and is freed from the difficulty of deciding whether to accept a particular offer or not.

Each method, then, has its peculiar advantages, and every seller of books must decide for himself which he will adopt. At the same time, it is worth noting that an auctioneer will not be inclined to handle a small number of books unless they are of some importance and value. So that if one wants to sell a single volume, or two or three volumes, it is usually better to do so directly to a bookseller. Furthermore, it has to be remembered that, out of the  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. commission which the auctioneer takes, he has to pay the costs of cataloguing, advertising the sale, etc. How much this may be is, of course, a variable figure ; but I was once told by an auctioneer friend that the cost, given a fairly brief and simple method of cataloguing, might be reckoned at 1s. 6d. per lot of the catalogue. If, for the sake of argument, we accept this figure, we can see that the auctioneer will not cover his expenses on a



lot that sells for less than 12s., and that it will not be worth his while to catalogue separately any book that is likely to fetch less than, say, £1. At the same time we may presume that it will not be worth an auctioneer's while to open a special account with a seller who is not disposing of, say, £20 worth of books. The seller, therefore, has some *rough* guide as to what he may expect an auctioneer to be willing to undertake to sell, and a hint, also, not to expect to see every one of his books separately catalogued for the sale. The great art of the auctioneer, indeed, lies in knowing which books to offer by themselves and which to bundle up so that several are sold in one lot.

Finally—if you want to sell books, go either to a reputable dealer, or to a competent auctioneer, whose special business it is to deal in books. Never allow books to be sold as part of a miscellaneous sale (especially in the country) unless you actually *know* them to be rubbish which is not worth the cost of transport to a more suitable market—and by “know” I don't mean “imagine.”

The main subject of this chapter is, however, not how to sell books, but how to buy them, and the general considerations which have been set out may perhaps help the collector to clear his mind and to set about forming his library in the most practical and enjoyable way. The secret is for him to go slowly, to begin by filling in the background with the commoner and cheaper books, and to pass on later to the acquisition of the rarities. So will he best be able to learn his business as he goes along, and to put to the best advantage the facilities offered



him by the various agencies from which books may be bought. If, by the process I have suggested, his collection is longer in reaching completeness, what does that matter? If the collector's progress is enjoyable, if, even, the mere leisureliness of it adds depth to his knowledge (as I believe it does), what need is there of haste? Why should he long to bring his pleasures to an end?

## CHAPTER VIII

### MODERN FIRST EDITIONS

HAVING dealt, in the last chapter, with some general considerations on the means by which books may be collected, and having touched, also, on the principles underlying the formation of a collection, I feel moved to write something on one branch of present-day book-collecting, which seems to me to be different, in kind I might almost say, from all other forms of book-collecting. I refer to the collecting of what are called "First Editions of Modern Authors." There are, at the present moment, probably more collectors of modern first editions than of any other type of book ; and it can hardly be denied that this is unfortunate, for, from the point of view of the additions which it can make to our stock of useful knowledge, this form of book collecting is almost certainly the least productive of all.

In some ways, of course, the collecting of the books of living authors does fulfil a useful purpose. Chiefly is this so in that this kind of collecting leads to accurate records being kept of the publications of writers whose work is considered to be of importance. It is hard for the least of the *opuscula* of such eagerly "collected" authors as Mr. George Moore, Mr. Kipling, Mr. de la Mare, or Mr. Masfield, to remain hidden from knowledge or unrecorded in

the lasting print of a bibliography. Indeed, the activities of the collector must sometimes be a trifle embarrassing to the "collected" authors: the distinguished prose-writer may well wish that the early anonymous pamphlet of bad verse should be forgotten, and the poet may be content that that *Guide to the Norwegian Lakes* (which he wrote for £10 without visiting Norway) should pass into oblivion—but the collector will insist on dragging everything into daylight, and putting a record of each wretched youthful literary indiscretion into a bibliography—which must often make the poor author wonder whether he is being flattered or derided. Posterity, however, may be grateful for this searching of authors' cupboards for skeletons. Had such treatment been given, in his lifetime, to Dean Swift (for example), how much more we should know about him, and what cause for gratitude we should have, to-day! And some modern authors do, indeed, richly repay the bibliographical study which has been devoted to their works—Mr. Kipling, for example, many of whose works have first been published in ephemeral form, or in corners of the world as far apart as Lahore, Santiago de Chile, and Medicine Hat.

In so far as concerns what may be called the historical side of bibliography, the collecting, and recording, of the first editions of contemporary authors is all to the good, especially when attention is given to an author who has done much pamphleteering or anonymous or pseudonymous work. Yet there are many writers—on whom great attention is bestowed by collectors, and who are bibliographised

at length and with all solemnity—whose literary careers present no problems, who have never published anything except full-dress books, signed with their own names, and whose publications have really nothing which the book-collector, or bibliographer, as opposed to the ordinary literary student, is in a position specially to make use of and appreciate. Labour spent on such writers is labour wasted, except in so far as a negative result, the demonstration that there is nothing there to demonstrate, may be valuable. And even those modern authors who have a secret history to be revealed by the book collector do not, in fact, give the widest scope for bibliographical investigation. After all, the special importance of the study of books as books—which is the science of bibliography—is that it enables the student to reconstruct, at least partially, an author's literary history from an examination of the various editions of his works. Now, in the first place, if the author is still alive, the most reliable method of obtaining this information is by asking the man himself, and not the physical form of his books, to supply it—always supposing, of course, that he is likely to tell you the truth about his career as an author. In other words, the functions of the literary historian, rather than those of the bibliographer, call for exercise the more usefully in an examination of the work of a contemporary writer. And, in the second place, modern methods of book-production in general, and of printing in particular, with their greater mechanical efficiency, tend to obliterate the personality of the individuals engaged in the work of production, and tend, also, to eliminate

those differences between various copies of an edition, and even between one edition and another, which are especially prone to provide the bibliographer with good material for investigation. The modern book, therefore, usually sets the bibliographer only the comparatively humdrum tasks of the recorder, and gives him little scope for his analytical and detective faculties. Therefore the collector and bibliographer who enjoys the use of his brain, and delights in the attempt to solve riddles and to reconstruct a human story from the inanimate objects—in this case books—which the past has handed down to him, will find his peculiar energies and talents far more usefully and pleasurably employed in the study of old books. To state this point in more concrete form—it is probable that two men, studying Dryden (let us say) from the bibliographical point of view, will find out many more things of importance about Dryden's literary career than fifty scholars, examining Mr. H. G. Wells's books in the same way, will find out about his career. Quite possibly, too, each of the fifty Wells investigators would discover the same set of facts, whereas (from the smaller degree of mechanical perfection of seventeenth-century printing) each of the two Dryden scholars would make peculiar discoveries of his own. It would be ridiculous to say that modern methods of book production give the bibliographer no opportunity; but they certainly reduce the number of his opportunities, and keep the average level of his work on a lower intellectual and imaginative plane than that of the bibliographer who works on earlier books.

It seems evident, then, that the bibliographical study of modern books is often a somewhat barren pursuit ; but this is not all. Even on what one may call the historical, or recording, side of book collecting the modern book often limits the usefulness of the collector. I do not say that this is so always ; there are, as has already been pointed out, modern authors who are responsible for many little by-products of their pen which well deserve collection, for these *opuscula* would probably be forgotten—or at least their authorship would slip out of mind—were it not for the curious attention of the collector. But of by far the greater number of contemporary writers the most assiduous collector can find nothing that is not to be found in the British Museum and in the other great libraries where a copy of every book published is supposed, under the copyright laws, to be deposited. I say supposed, for a certain number of publications seem, somehow, to escape their proper fate in this matter ; but these are usually pamphlets and other small works of the sort which, as I have just suggested, may very usefully engage the attention of the collector of modern books. Yet, in the case of many authors, the collector of their works does no more than duplicate the information which is already easily available, to any person possessed of a reader's ticket, in the British Museum reading room.

A word which I have used a line or so back—duplicate—may engage our attention for a moment, though as a noun, or adjective, rather than as a verb. In a collection of modern books, the mechanical perfection, which is commonly achieved to-day



in book production, renders it highly probable that one copy of a particular edition will be exactly like another copy of the same edition. In the same way, it is probable that one set of the writings of a particular author will teach us nothing that another set will not also teach. Consequently, for several collectors to devote their energies to collecting the same books is to waste a great deal of good effort ; and since there are several million printed books in the world, and only a few thousand collectors, this wasteful overlapping seems unnecessary. But with old books the case is different. Any set of a particular series of books printed in the days of the hand-setting of type may—however many other apparently similar sets there may be—very well add some item of knowledge, great or small, to our general store of information on the subject. Indeed, we may say that, so long as the human element in the setting and printing of a book exerts an appreciable influence on the product, and is not wholly, or almost wholly, subjected to the mechanical, the possibility of variation from copy to copy is so great that every copy is worth individual examination and study. The printed book produced under those conditions has in its very physical form much of human nature, and of human instability. And it would hardly be going too far to accept the conclusion—which curators of natural history museums are inevitably coming to accept—that there is no such thing as a duplicate specimen. But the greater is the mechanical perfection of the processes by which an author's manuscript is converted into a printed book—which is usually the same as saying the more

modern is the book — the less true does this become.

The fact is, that the most profitable way in which modern books may be collected is by subject, rather than by author, except in particular cases which will readily suggest themselves to anyone who has even dabbled in the study of modern books. Indeed, it is probably true that the wisest men have always bought the books of their contemporaries for the sake of the matter in the books, and not for the sake of their authors. After all, this is the natural way for people to buy current books, for it is the way envisaged by the authors when they write their books. An author, sitting down at his desk, does not labour to produce another first edition by Jones ; he sits down to write something which, as he hopes, it will interest a number of persons to read ; and it is always best to use any article in the way in which its producer intended it to be used. It is, no doubt, useful that sets of the books of important writers should be collected together for museum purposes ; but no special merit, no claim to the honourable title of book-collector, accrues to the person who collects exactly the same sets of first editions as are collected by numbers of other persons. The very essence of a collection of books is that it should have individuality.

I have now advanced a variety of excellent reasons, of a more or less ethical nature, why the collection of "First Editions of Modern Authors," as that pursuit is generally understood, is to a large extent a waste of time. Let me also suggest the possibility that it is, in addition, a waste of money,

in a more mundane sense of that phrase than is implied as a natural consequence of the waste of time. The monetary value of books depends, like that of all other commodities, upon supply and demand, and first editions of modern authors are monetarily valuable because there are more collectors anxious to buy them than there are copies upon the market. There is obviously no proof that this state of affairs will continue, indeed, in considering the value of no kind of book is such proof possible. We cannot *prove* that literary taste will not, one day, reject Shakespeare, and that first folios will not then be sold at 2*s.* 6*d.* apiece. We can only express a conviction that such a state of affairs is unlikely to occur within the next century or two, and we are fortified in our conviction by knowing that, at least, the market can never be glutted with first folios—that, in other words, it is extremely probable that there will always be more buyers than sellers of first folios, since nothing can materially increase the supply of such books—a few copies might, conceivably, be found in an old cupboard, but that is all. To state the case more generally, we may say that of all important or highly-prized books which are more than, let us say, seventy-five or a hundred years old, the available supply is approximately constant and—therefore—ascertainable.

Would such a statement be true of books published within the last ten or twenty years? To answer that question, let us consider for a moment what happens to a book when it appears. For the purposes of this chapter, we may disregard those books the first editions of which remain in print and

are still available for sale in their publisher's warehouses. I *have* known instances in which false assumptions have been made, both in bookshops and in the sale-rooms, that certain books were out of print, with the result that they changed hands for more money than they could, on the very same day, have been bought for from their publishers ; but such instances are merely amusing accidents, and, perhaps, evidence of some lack of contact between the world of book-collectors and that of those who buy books without being collectors. As a general rule, however, a first edition which is still in print has only two prices—the published price for a new copy, and a less sum for a second-hand one. It is only first editions that are out of print that are (or may be) at a premium, because booksellers receive a number of orders for these books which they cannot immediately satisfy. Yet it is extremely doubtful whether many of even those first editions which fetch considerable sums are really rare. Supposing a book to have been issued commercially within the last ten years or so, it is extremely unlikely that there were less than 500 copies, at the very least, printed,<sup>1</sup> and, unless part of the edition was pulped as unsaleable or otherwise destroyed, those 500 copies were sold to the public. As not many years have passed since the book was printed, it is unlikely that the passage of time has destroyed or defaced a large percentage of the copies sold, and we may feel certain that substantially the whole number of them is in existence somewhere. Where that somewhere is will be

<sup>1</sup> These remarks take no account, of course, of limited editions, which are produced for the sole and deliberate purpose of being rarities from birth.

evident when we consider that by far the greater number of people who buy a book, when it comes out, buy it to read and to add to the family store of books. It is only the exceptional buyer who does not, when he purchases a book, regard it as a more or less permanent addition to his household goods. Furthermore most buyers keep to their original intention, and do not, in fact, get rid of the books they have acquired. It is only death, or some violent change in the manner of life, that leads to the books being sold ; but it is perhaps twenty or thirty years, after the date of first publication, before death has brought any considerable number of copies of a given edition out of the private libraries of their original owners and into the book-market.

It is therefore likely that, once an edition is exhausted, it will become automatically scarce *in the bookshops*, though there may be hundreds of copies in the hands of private individuals. Even the fact that the book in question becomes worth as many pounds as it originally cost shillings, will not bring enough copies on to the market to satisfy the demand ; for the ordinary cultured individual, who buys books as they appear, and regardless of edition, for his own reading, is usually completely ignorant of the current second-hand values of his books. Yet in twenty or thirty years, when the generation of the original buyers of the book begins to die off fairly rapidly, and their libraries begin to come frequently under the hammer, there is certain to be an increase in the number of available copies, and probably more copies will be offered for sale than will readily find buyers—unless, of course, the book is one that has



increased, and is still increasing, in popular estimation and favour.

Therefore, regarded as a long investment, the buying of "modern first editions" is likely to prove a waste of money, since you are buying something of which the supply is (with few exceptions) certain to increase in a few years' time, so that, unless the demand increases in an even higher degree, the price is certain to decrease. Unless, then, a collector is very sure that his literary judgment will coincide with that of succeeding generations, he will be unwise if he entertains the belief that his buying of modern books has anything to recommend it as a long investment. Indeed, it is doubtful whether money locked up for a long period of time in books of any kind has ever brought its owner as much profit as he would have received had the money been invested in some other form of property. I know that when one thinks of the huge prices paid for certain books this statement seems highly disputable; but it must be remembered that it is only one book in many thousands which eventually fetches a very high price, and that money invested in books brings in no annual dividend. Of course, there is money to be made out of books, but it is by buying at the right moment and selling again fairly quickly; and as a short investment modern first editions are as good as anything—to the man with knowledge and a *flair* for speculation in books. But buying in order to sell again, quickly, at a profit, is speculation pure and simple, and not book collecting, which is the subject of this work.

Yet, in spite of every argument to the contrary—



mine as well as others', no doubt—many people will persist in collecting modern first editions ; and, frankly, one can understand, even if one does not share, their reasons. Many people have no antiquarian tastes, and yet have the love of collecting—to these the modern first edition is the most attractive type of book. Others are genuinely interested in the literature of their own time, rather than that of past ages ; and, certainly, it is good that there should be persons of this cast of mind. To such people, however, I would, if I might without presumption do so, give the advice to allow their own love of literature, and their own judgment, to be their guides in collecting. If they like modern poetry, let them, by all means, collect it ; let them try to buy all good books of verse as they appear, and—if they will—buy, even at fancy prices, first editions of established poets whom they admire. But let them not stop at first editions, let them also collect all editions which the author has in any way revised. Furthermore, because Mr. Z. happens to be a first-rate poet, is it necessary that his early pamphlet on malacology (of which learned malacologists, by the way, do not think a vast deal) should be acquired, with much pains and heavy expenditure, by the collector whose interest is in Z.'s poems ? Surely not. Is it not enough, in all conscience, that the British Museum and the other copyright libraries should possess copies, and that Z.'s bibliographer should record its existence ? Any available copies should be allowed to pass easily and cheaply into the hands of those interested in malacology, supposing that they should think Z.'s early effort worth pur-

chasing even for pence. Again—and let us this time take an actual instance—why should a collector, who is interested in the modern novel and regards Mr. George Moore as a great novelist, trouble to collect every book Mr. Moore has ever written? Certainly, let our collector acquire the best possible copies of the novels, but I suggest that there is something wrong in the mental attitude of the bibliophile who regards Mr. Moore as, first and foremost, the author of certain books of inferior verse which he himself would—no doubt, though I speak without authority on this point—choose to have forgotten. I do not say that they should be forgotten; indeed, I hold that no facts of this sort should be forgotten, and that it is a matter of general interest that Mr. Moore did write his early poetry. But I do say that when book-collecting leads rational beings to regard every writer as necessarily having, for his principal claim to distinction, the authorship of his rarest (and probably worst) book, then there is something gravely wrong with that particular form of book-collecting. This, by the way, is a criticism which is applicable to the collecting not only of modern books, but of all books.

It seems, therefore, that the substance of this chapter amounts, in the end, to a plea for the exercise of individual judgment in the formation of a collection of modern books; to which plea is added the suggestion that personal choice will have a better chance of expressing itself, and of creating a library that has a life and utility of its own, and that is not the mere duplicate of half-a-hundred other libraries, if the collector chooses the books he buys for their

subjects rather than for their authors. Yet even so, and be the library of modern books ever so cunningly and originally amassed and compounded, I cannot help opining that its maker will not have in his creation quite that exquisite pleasure which is the lot of the collector of older books—but this, perhaps, is mere personal prejudice.

## CHAPTER IX

### A FEW SUGGESTIONS

SINCE the last chapter was devoted mainly to reasons against the collecting of a certain type of book, it is perhaps only fair that in this chapter I should throw out a few suggestions as to some ways in which a library may be formed pleasantly and usefully ; and I may as well confess that what I am about to write will be written from the most selfish point of view, for it will deal entirely with things which I, personally, want to see collected by someone, or which I have enjoyed collecting myself.

So far as the amateur bibliophile is concerned, the test of successful collecting is whether or not it yields him both pleasure and knowledge that he could not otherwise have acquired. From this test, I fancy, present-day collectors emerge pretty well ; there are at any rate a creditable number who have been moved to record in book form the knowledge they have gained from their hobby. We have, on the one hand, the agreeable and bookish geniality of Mr. A. Edward Newton, who, though he is not a bibliographer in the restricted sense of the word, is a collector who translates his pleasure into prose which is delightfully easy to read. On the other hand we have the almost religious devotion and assiduity of Mr. T. J. Wise—though it is perhaps unfair to class

a bibliographer, who is responsible for a whole library of valuable works, among the amateurs. We have the magnificent individual bibliographies of Dr. Geoffrey Keynes, and the excursions in cartography of Sir H. G. Fordham ; and there are many others to whom, equally, bibliography is not a profession, but an avocation, who have yet enriched our store of knowledge with the writings to which their hobby has inspired them.

Yet, were I to have to choose an example of the true amateur book-collector for the admiration and emulation of others, I think I would select Mr. Philip Gosse, not because his work is more important—as important even—as that of certain others, but because he has shown so admirably how much can be done by a busy man devoting a limited amount of leisure to a small corner of the vast field of book-collecting. Mr. Gosse has found, indeed, an ideal subject for intensive study—a subject amusing, historically interesting, and neither lavish, nor niggardly, of literature. I refer to the subject of Pirates and Piracy. I am not in Mr. Gosse's confidence, but I should be surprised if his hobby had cost him a vast fortune ; I should guess, rather, that he had got his collection of pirate literature together fairly cheaply. Yet it has already yielded him material for three successful books, one historical, *The Pirates' Who's Who*, and the other two more strictly bibliographical, *My Pirate Library* and *A Bibliography of the Works of Captain Charles Johnson*, the gallant captain being, it may be added, the leading biographer of pirates and highwaymen.

Would that every other collector would do as

Mr. Gosse (and not, of course, he only) has done—choose a subject that interests him and is of a manageable size, and then proceed to work it thoroughly and publish the results, if they appear of enough general interest to warrant publication. But, alas, so many collectors merely want to collect that which a multitude of other people also want to collect ; and they forget that it is only by striking out a line of their own that they can make their hobby of real benefit either to themselves or to the world. The aim should be not merely to possess books, but to find things out about them. One of the most astounding, one of the saddest, confessions I ever read was that of the late William Harris Arnold, a well-known American collector, who, at the end of a long career of book-collecting, wrote that he had only once made a bibliographical discovery—and that a very small one. Why, the man can never have looked at his books—for I defy any intelligent person to look at all carefully over even a small collection without making bibliographical discoveries in quantities. But, I repeat, too many collectors only seem to want to gloat over their possessions, and not to study them.

There is no shortage of subjects for bibliographical study. They abound, and are of all dimensions, from the vast subjects which demand a lifetime's devotion, downwards. No man, that is a man, will—as I have remarked before—consent to have his choice of a subject dictated to him ; but I conceive that it may be useful to suggest certain lines upon which collectors might, with advantage to themselves and to the community, proceed, and



in doing so, I would wish to make it quite clear, that these suggestions are made rather as illustrative examples than as anything else.

Let us start by considering one or two of the big subjects which stand in obvious need of investigation by book-collectors. There is, for instance, Theology, which is, generally speaking, a drug in the market at the present time. Yet Theology deals with matters which are of supreme importance to the human race, and it has always occupied some of the attention—sometimes has almost monopolised it—of the men of greatest intellect. There are, at the present time, certain theological books which are eagerly sought by collectors, and certain theological writers who have been properly studied, and whose merits are fully realised. But on the whole it is fair to say that our theological literature is much neglected, and that he who would systematically study (for instance) the English sermons of the seventeenth century, would be very likely to discover a quantity of notable English prose, and might easily find himself in the position to re-introduce to the world first-rate writers who are, at the present moment, completely forgotten. At any rate the country is worth prospecting, and it is only by undertaking such pioneering work as this that the book-collector can hope to justify his belief that his favourite pursuit is more than a harmless killing of time and a safe expenditure of surplus cash.

Again, there is one large bulk of English verse that is practically unknown at the present time. This is the verse written at the beginning of the nineteenth century by all but some half-dozen great

poets. Of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Landor, Byron, Moore, and perhaps a few others, we have knowledge and are in a position to form fair critical estimates of their merits. But is there any other period of English literature of which we know so little as regards the minor poets? Is there anybody (except, perhaps, Mr. J. C. Squire) who knows the poems of Bernard Barton? Has even Mr. Squire read those of George Croly? Yet common sense tells us that many of these minors must have had merit, and must have written, between them, a good number of pretty poems, which are quite unknown to modern readers and well worthy of resuscitation. These poets lived long enough ago for them to have been forgotten, but not yet long enough for them to have caught the attention of the antiquaries. In consequence, these poor contemporaries of Shelley and of Wordsworth cry aloud for a book-collector to gather their works together and to begin the work of sorting out the good from the bad. Will no book lover undertake this work? The books are lying waiting for him in almost every bookshop in the country, and they are to be bought for next to no money at all. If any person of taste and judgment feels moved to take pity on all these neglected poets, I promise him that he will find himself possessed of the material for an extremely interesting anthology, and one which, unlike most anthologies, will not be a mere re-mixing of old ingredients. I can also promise him—with almost as great a certainty—that a considerable proportion of the critics will assure him that he has been wasting his time and that there is nothing (for the anthologist) like sticking to the

accepted bits of the accepted authors. But let him not worry, if he has done his work properly he will gradually begin to perceive that first one, and then another, of his discoveries is acquiring a reputation, whereas before he had none. Then may the collector feel glad, and know that his searching of book-shops was not a waste of time and money, but has *done something* in the world. He can even, should any of his poets warrant it, pass on from treating them as subjects only for literary appreciation, and turn to the compilation of full-dress bibliographies of some of the more important of them. Then he can—but I have said enough, and it is needless to plunge on down the lengthening vista of possible work which a contemplation of this subject reveals to one.

Those, then, are two of the comparatively large pieces of work which are waiting for the right person to tackle them, and which cannot be tackled at all except by the formation of suitable collections of books. Even the consultation of the books in a public library would hardly do, for one never reads a book to as good purpose in a museum as one does in one's own study, and the creator of his own *ad hoc* collection will find his task made much easier thereby. There is no need to suggest here other big subjects which are awaiting their proper collector; but of the smaller subjects one or two, chosen haphazard from my recollection of those that have occurred to me at odd times during the past few years, may be mentioned.

The study of the work of a particular book illustrator will often provide a magnificent idea for a

collection of books. The classic example in this kind is, I suppose, supplied by the collections and the stout bibliographical volumes (particularly those of the Reverend Thomas Hugo), which have been made of, and concerning, the books illustrated by the wood-engravers John and Thomas Bewick. There is still much work to be done on the Bewicks, whose art had a bad slump (from which it has not yet recovered) in public favour after the amazing boom it enjoyed in the middle of the nineteenth century. George Cruickshank has also had his bibliographers, and his ups and downs of popularity. No doubt (though I speak without knowledge) there is still work to be done on Cruickshank. But I am not suggesting the mere supplementing of previous bibliographers' work—the point I would like to make is that there are many admirable illustrators whose work is, practically speaking, unrecorded and unarranged. Has anyone, for instance, ever studied the illustrative work of Thomas Stothard, about whom I know little except that he illustrated many books, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and that one of them, the duodecimo edition of Samuel Rogers's poems, contains some of the most lightly charming book decorations I have ever seen? So far as I know, no one is making a collection of books illustrated by Stothard, though the collection would be a delight to form, and might quite possibly provide material for an interesting bibliography.

Stothard is only one. There are others even less regarded. One of them was an engraver who was doing work for the Oxford Press at the end of the seventeenth century. You can pick his work out

quite easily by its individual style, in many of the popular devotional books of the period, of *The Ladies' Calling* type ; but I have no idea of his name. Another is, to me, a name and little else—Francis Hoffman, who designed end-pieces, initial letters, and the like, for many books about the years 1720 and 1730. He sometimes signed his work "F.H." and once (at least) I have seen a block signed with his name in full. Each of these artists I have, at different times, felt that I should like to know more about, and there are many more, even some of them men of considerable distinction who would give a collector much enjoyable hunting, and would certainly teach him a great deal.

Interest in a particular locality is one of the most fertile causes of book-collecting, and many dealers make a point of cataloguing books under the names of the places to which they refer—from which I infer that there are a large number of collectors, especially of comparatively unmoneyed collectors, who go in for local history and topography. A specialised form of this species of collecting relates to the history of the craft of printing as it developed in a particular town. This has always appealed to me as a peculiarly attractive form of local history, and a moderate-sized English provincial town, and even sometimes a pretty small one, has probably been responsible, since the end of the seventeenth century and occasionally from an earlier date, for a body of printing (not only books, but notices of sales, newspapers, election bills, and a hundred other things) that would make a collection of very great local interest. The trouble is that such things are in an



especial degree perishable, and that it is a long and weary task to fish from out the cupboards of the past such remnants of them as may remain in existence. Yet the attempt is a thousand times worth making by any person who is favourably circumstanced for so doing.

So far in this chapter I have referred to certain kinds of books, which are in need, as books, or at least for the sake of that which is printed in them or put in them by way of illustration, of the collector's kind offices. But now, possibly, the right moment has come to point out that a book may also be desirable, not for its own sake, but for the sake of something which has been added to it, since it was printed, by those who have had the handling of it. An obvious thing of this kind is the binding ; but bindings are a subject of their own, and a big one, of which I intend to say nothing (so far as binding as an art and craft is concerned) in this book. Looked at in another light, however, bindings may have a word here, for old specimens are sometimes profitable hunting-grounds for the collector. This is because it frequently happened (up to, say, the middle of the seventeenth century) that mediæval manuscripts, sometimes of great importance, were cut up by binders and used for strengthening the binding of a printed book. It is, therefore, always worth while examining old bindings (especially if they are coming to pieces) to see whether any interesting fragments of manuscript are to be found in them. Moreover, it is not always only ancient manuscript that was used thus. Sometimes sheets of printed material—possibly part of some edition



that had not sold well, possibly trial pulls or other surplus of the printing office—were used in bindings as stiffening, or to paste inside the boards of the side-covers. Now the passage of time has occasionally brought it about that those despised pieces of printed paper are more interesting than the books in whose bindings they are interred. Some early printed books are, indeed, only known from fragments found in bindings ; and to rescue and examine any pieces of print noticed in an old binding is a thing that is always worth doing. On this point I may, perhaps, be allowed to quote what the late E. Gordon Duff wrote in his bibliography of *Fifteenth Century English Books* :—

“Roughly speaking, one half of the books here chronicled are known only from single copies, from a leaf or two, or even from fragments of a leaf. The sole remains of *The Ghost of Guy*, a quarto printed by Pynson early in his career, are two small strips of paper with portions of four lines of verse on either side. Another of Pynson’s early quartos, the *Seven Wise Masters of Rome*, is represented by two leaves. The majority of such fragments have been recovered from old bindings where they have been used to line the boards, or pasted together to make the boards themselves. From this source it is hoped that there are still new discoveries to be made.”

There are, however, additions to a book which are more closely connected with its entity—at least that is the way it always strikes me—than either the binding (excepting always any binding, or other covering, which was originally issued with the book) or any manuscript or printed matter that has been used in the construction of the binding. I mean those various marks, usually in writing, which previous owners have made in a book, and which

seem, so often, to have added character to the volume, and to have become part of it. These signs of previous ownership may be of many kinds, some of them bad (such as the results of marking a place by inserting between two leaves a buttery knife, or of leaving the book open with a wet pint-pot placed upon it to keep it so) for marks of this kind show us only that the previous owner was no lover of books—though of literature he may have been—and do not amplify the individual character of a volume, but rather detract from it. But other kinds of mark are the result not of boorishness, nor of carelessness, but of love, and then they only make the book a more delightful thing to possess, with a fuller aroma about it. Books that bear the marks of past affectionate regard in this way, are more human, personal, things than other books, and are amongst the most delightful things to collect. When the previous owner, who has left his mark, was a person of eminence, the book is usually referred to, in bookseller's jargon, as an "Association copy."

The commonest form of personal mark that occurs is the signature of the first owner of the book. Any person who cares at all for a new book which he has acquired wants to write his name in it, and the impulse is a healthy one, indicating an affectionate pride of ownership. There is something unnatural about the omission to inscribe one's name in a new book, something that implies either that one cares little *who* owns it, or that one is buying it, not for one's own pleasure, but to hand on in some way (possibly by sale at a profit) to someone else. In neither case is one's ownership of the book more

than what might quite fairly be classed as a legal fiction.

This matter of declaring ownership of a book is one that has always interested me considerably, and it ought, surely, to interest other collectors. There are three ways (there may be more) in which it can be done, by signature, by using a stamp, or by the pasting in of a book-plate. The second method—that of the rubber or other stamp—is too sordid for consideration here, and its employment is only excusable in a great public library—which is, after all, a thing without individuality ; but there are many respectable advocates of the book-plate.

Admittedly, many book-plates are, in themselves, things of great beauty, and the right book-plate in the right book occasionally looks well enough. The best book-plates, to my mind, are those which bear either the owner's coat-of-arms or merely his name and address neatly printed. These seem to me to have at least the merit of being designed mainly with an eye to their proper function of declaring the ownership of the books in which they are stuck. But your real book-plate fiend, nine times out of ten, prefers a picture of monks going fishing or of ladies dancing a minuet, with the name of the owner of the library worked in somewhere on an elegant scroll. I have no hesitation in declaring such things to be utter abominations—for who on earth wants to put the same picture in every book he possesses, even supposing it is a picture he would like to put in one particular book ? Even an armorial book-plate—and some of these are very lovely things—does not look equally well in every book ; one reason being

that its size and proportions may easily be out of harmony with the size and proportions of the book in which it is pasted. But I have a more fundamental dislike of the book-plate than that, and this is that the book-plate is an impersonal thing, designed, in all probability, by someone who never even saw the books for which it is intended. Again, I can never get over the feeling that the man who has a book-plate neatly fixed in each of his books employed some person—private secretary or what not—to do the sticking in for him. Finally, the book-plate never seems to become part of the book in which it is found, a failure which appears to be demonstrated by the fact that book-plate collectors usually remove book-plates from the books in which they are found, and collect them as objects having independent artistic existences of their own. Therefore I feel justified in saying no more about book-plates (in this book, which is intended for *book*-collectors) than is necessary to dismiss them with an ignominy only second to that of the rubber stamp.

No, the true way to mark the ownership of a book is by signature—but even in this there are rights and wrongs. Where should the signature be written? Not, for heaven's sake, upon the title-page, but decently inside the front cover or on a blank leaf. Again is one's name to be written in all books alike, old as well as new? Here, indeed, is a problem. With the new book the solution is easy enough—write your name in the book if it is one which you wish to keep, and with which you would like your name, in years to come, to be associated. But the old books—there lies the difficulty; is each purchaser

in turn to inscribe his signature in some precious old volume? Surely not, unless there is some extraordinary reason why he should do so, or unless he knows himself to be so great a man that his signature will add something to the glory of even a rare Shakespeare quarto—and what book-lover would be so bold as to presume that? Rather let the glory of association with a good book remain the perquisite of the original purchaser. When all is said and done, the man who, as near as might be, bought the book from the author himself, and wrote his name on the fly-leaf when the book was new, still remains, in a spiritual sense, its owner. To set any name against his is presumption.

This, dear reader, brings me back more nearly to the subject of this chapter, for books that were originally owned by interesting personages, and bear their signatures, are always pleasant things to possess. To form a collection of books, chosen for the sole reason that they contain the autographs of the eminent, would be a poor thing to do; but the collector may not ungraciously cherish an especial tenderness for books which—while otherwise conforming to the general scheme of his library—yet have the added charm of bearing the mark of some sympathetic previous owner. When that owner was the author himself, or was a friend to whom the author presented a copy, the pleasure of now owning his book is many times increased; and, naturally, in the second of these cases, it is the donor's, rather than the recipient's, handwriting that we hope to find. It is so much more satisfactory, from all points of view, to possess a volume inscribed—let us say—



“To Dash Blank, Esq., from his Obedient Servant, P. B. Shelley,” in Shelley’s own writing, than to have the same book inscribed only with the signature of Dash Blank and a note that “This book was given me by my respected friend, P. B. Shelley, Esq.” After all, Mr. Blank might, in the latter case, only have been trying to impress visitors to his library, and Shelley might never even have seen the book ! From this simple example we can deduce the often overlooked fact that not all presentation copies are of equal interest or value. Three things go to the fixing of the value of a presentation copy—the importance of the donor, the importance of the recipient, and the importance of the book itself. And it is worth noting, incidentally, that these three factors are also those which fix the value of an autograph letter, which depends for its interest upon its writer, its recipient, and its subject-matter ; so that a letter from Dickens to Thackeray is more valuable than one from Dickens to his tailor, and that if, in the former letter, the writer describes how he wrote the *Pickwick Papers*, the letter is again more valuable than if it only contained an invitation to dinner. Therefore, just as the collector of autograph letters desires to have his specimens of the highest possible interest in the three points of author, recipient and subject, so does the collector of presentation copies desire most of all volumes which have in the highest degree an analogous threefold interest as to donor, recipient, and the book itself.

It sometimes happens that a presentation copy may be a delightful thing to possess for none of these things so much as for the manner of the dedication.



I have in mind, as I write, a book which I found stuck, under nearly half an inch of dust, on the very top shelf of a suburban bookshop. For 2s. 6d. it was mine, and since the heavier part of this little treatise is now behind me, the reader will perhaps pardon me if I speak of this purchase here for a page or so. The volume was an octavo, printed in 1697, and called *The Christian Pattern Paraphras'd; or, The Book of the Imitation of Christ, commonly ascrib'd to Thomas A Kempis, made English by Luke Milbourne, a Presbyter of the Church of England*. In other words, it was a verse paraphrase of the *De Imitatione Christi*, and so was not particularly interesting in itself. On the fly-leaf, however, were inscribed some verses, headed "To Callidora," and clearly written to accompany the gift of the identical copy I held in my hand—but since no man could say who "Callidora" was, the book could not claim any interest from its recipient. But the signature of the manuscript verses was a monogram of the letters L. M., and it occurred to me that "L. M." might well be Luke Milbourne, the author of the book.

A subsequent visit to the manuscript department of the British Museum proved this guess to be correct; so I could at least claim that my copy of *The Christian Pattern Paraphras'd* was an author's presentation copy. Even that, however, did not seem to give it any very high degree of interest for its donor's sake, since Luke Milbourne was not a man of great eminence. He was born in 1649 and died in 1720—but then birth and death are common to all men, and but a poor claim to distinction. Milbourne, however, had once quarrelled with John

Dryden, and Alexander Pope had given him a tiny place in *The Dunciad*, where a note speaks of " Luke Milbourne a clergyman, the fairest of critics ; who, when he wrote against Mr. Dryden's *Virgil*, did him justice in printing at the same time his own translations of him, which were intolerable." Moreover, Pope also cited Milbourne, along with Sir Richard Blackmore, as the very type of a bad critic, in the *Essay on Criticism*. So that, perhaps, a trifle of twice-reflected glory might be observed, by a quick eye for such things, to flicker about my book. The charm of the verses themselves, however, far transcended any faint interest one might have in their author for the sake of his recorded career. They ran thus :—

#### TO CALLIDORA.

---

See, Madam, how your Saviour here  
To reach your Heart attempts your Ear,  
Speaks in the Kindest Softest Strains,  
But something of Neglect complains.

Read here ! His Sacred Pattern view,  
For you He Liv'd, and Dy'd for you,  
And shall his tenderest Hopes be Cross'd,  
Or your Immortal Part be lost ?

He cast you in the Fairest Mould,  
And then the lovely Frame ensoul'd  
With an aspiring ductile Mind  
To Virtues Ways and Ends inclin'd.  
He calls you, Madam, here, and He  
Your Guide to Paradise would be [;]  
And shall a lovely Shape, possess'd  
And Fill'd by such a Charming Guest,  
In Chains of endles Darkness ly,  
Or in undying Tortures Dy ?

Here shines the never Clouded Sun,  
 Enlighten'd by whose Beams you'll run  
 Religious Virtues glorious Race,  
 And all your Lords Commands embrace.  
 Faith, Patience and Humility  
 Shall All in All your Actions see,  
 Obedience, inward Peace and Joy  
 Shall all your Active Thoughts employ,  
 You to the World and Sense will Dy,  
 And wandring Passions Mortify,  
 Nor shall the Fiends encroaching Art,  
 Distract your Thoughts or Gain your Heart.

But on your Master Fixt your Eys  
 Will pierce the Interposing Skys,  
 Dwell on the Glories of his Sight  
 And glut Themselves with Heavenly Light.  
 Each Duty Here a Step shall prove  
 By which you'll Upward Firmly move,  
 And in your Saviours Bosome rest  
 Of Life and Love and Peace and endless Joys possess'd.

L. M. 1704/5.

There are bad lines in that—but there are also good ones, and there is grace and genuine feeling in the poem. I print it here as an example of the kind of thing which it is always worth looking out for, since, when a collector does find an agreeable thing of this sort, it always remains a pleasure to him to reflect how he has rescued it from oblivion. One day, maybe, you who read these words will find something much better, in the way of a verse inscription, than anything Luke Milbourne ever wrote or I, myself, ever had the luck to find.

Even more interesting than presentation copies, are those copies which contain the author's own manuscript notes or corrections. As to these, I

would say to the collector that it is almost his bounden duty, when he sees a book, annotated by ever so obscure an author, lying unregarded in a bookshop, to buy it, if it is to be had at anything like a reasonable price. Somebody will some day probably want to use the book, and would be overjoyed if he could have access to the author's corrected copy. Let the finder, therefore, if he does not care for the book himself, give it to some library where it will be cared for, and may be consulted by any person interested. A collector who would make a point of looking out for books containing author's corrections and transferring them to a place of safety—preferably a public library—would be performing a valuable service. I am not here speaking of books by great authors—there are plenty of people to look after them, and their annotated copies are among the most valuable (in a monetary sense) of all books—but of the little authors “whom there are none to praise and very few to love.”

There is, too, another kind of book with manuscript additions which makes an agreeable subject for a very small collection, or rather, perhaps, for a short and inconsequential shelf in a more seriously compiled library. I mean the book which has had its fly-leaf, or other blank pages, used by some former owner as a sort of Commonplace Book. Now it is freely to be admitted that to use a book in this way is to follow a highly reprehensible course of conduct—and yet I have often found that an old book, that has been thus treated, is a most entertaining thing to possess, and I have bought, at one time or another, quite a number of books only because they have had

scribbled in them a few scraps of doggerel or an old medical prescription.

In particular, there are two copies of old folio editions of Abraham Cowley's works for which I have a peculiar affection. One is of the edition of 1668, and was once possessed by that great scholar and editor, A. H. Bullen, who wrote his signature in it. That, of itself, made the volume pleasant to possess, but what I particularly like about it is that on the back of Faithorne's portrait of the poet, which is the frontispiece of the book, some previous owner, whose handwriting declares him to have lived in the late seventeenth century, has written two sets of verses. One of these, which I shall not quote here, is a Latin version of Cowley's second *Anacreontique*—the one which, as the reader will remember, begins

The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,  
And drinks, and gapes for drink again.

The other—which especially I prize—is some doggerel inscribed “Upon a firkin of ale sent to one Mr. Pindar, in Cambridge.” It runs thus :—

Away with hide-bound books  
Give me a firkin  
Wel claspd with hoops  
And bound in oaken Jerkin[.]  
For all yo<sup>r</sup> Lexicographers what care I?  
Pindar's explaind by Cooper's Dictionarie.

Greater poems have, no doubt, been written; yet I confess to having had much enjoyment from these lines to Mr. Pindar, especially as it is possible to get some notion of his identity. There was a family of his name living at Cambridge at the end of the seven-



teenth century, one member of which was employed as a bookbinder by the University Library, and it was probably to him that my lines were sent. Or possibly it may have been to one of the two Jonathan Pindars who were appointed University printers, the one in 1686, and the other in 1697 ; though, since neither of these two worthies ever printed anything at all (so far as is known), the exhortation "Away with hide-bound books !" would hardly seem to have been necessary. The glimpse these verses give into old Cambridge life is, possibly, not very penetrating, and not very clear—but it is enough to set the imagination riding off on its own. Anyhow, I like the lines, in spite of their final rather heavy-handed pun, which refers, I may explain, to the famous *Thesaurus Linguae Romanæ et Britannicæ* compiled by Thomas Cooper (successively Bishop of Lincoln and Winchester), and first printed in 1565.

My other Cowley folio (I wonder, by the way, what it was that made our ancestors so fond of scribbling on the fly-leaves of the spacious folios of this delightful poet) is of the edition of 1700. The fly-leaf, and the inside of the front cover, of this volume are full of all sorts of inscriptions, made by past owners. There is, for instance, an arrangement of intersecting circles which may, or may not, have some mathematical or astronomical significance. Then there is a worldly-wise epigram in verse :—

We under friendship's name are oft deceiv'd,  
An Enimy (with ease) is nair Beleived.

A couplet which might be made quite passable by altering "is nair Beleived" into "is disbelieved."



Finally comes what is surely the outline of a tragedy. This consists of two entries. The one is in a woman's hand, and runs as follows :—

AN APPROV'D REMEDY FOR A CANCER IN THE BREST.

Take of the hard Knobs or warts which grow on the legs of A stoan'd Horse Drye them & powder them give from one scruple to half a dram every morning and evening in A Glass of Sack continew this

—until death, I think ; for there follows, in another hand, the second entry :—

Dear Jane Doughty !

The reader may think that I have digressed too extravagantly in writing at such length, in such a book as that which I am now writing, of these quite unimportant volumes. My point is this—that the books may, bibliographically speaking, be of little importance, but that the things which their long-dead owners have written in them have lifted them out of their insignificance as books, and given them a life of their own as human voices—of quite ordinary people, no doubt—coming down to us out of the past. I would plead with the collector to have a small shelf reserved in his library for such (often unregarded) trifles—I can assure him that he will not find it the least delightful of his shelves.

It would be easy to prolong this chapter to almost any length. An endless succession of subjects round which collections of books could be built suggests itself to the mind without any difficulty. For example, a friend, with whom I was discussing this question recently, put forward the idea that it would be interesting to form a collection of all the

books reviewed by Lord Macaulay; and, indeed, that would make a very entertaining library, and one that would teach one a good deal about the canons of critical taste in the early nineteenth century. Yet, if I have not written this chapter altogether in vain, I have already said enough to set the embryo collector's mind at work, and to show him that there are bye-paths, in plenty, waiting for him to explore and to map. It seems, therefore, needless to say more of particular subjects.

Yet, whatever subject the collector may choose to make his own, his collecting must proceed on the same fundamental principles. He must buy the books that have their proper places in his scheme, and that illumine some aspect of his study. He must also—ideally—buy without regard to price; that is, he must buy books because he wants them, and not (like a few pitiable persons) because they are expensive, or (a much commoner error) because they are cheap. Such counsel, to the majority of mankind, who cannot spend more than a limited sum on books, obviously cannot generally be followed to the letter; nevertheless there is a truth, at the bottom of it, which is worth bearing in mind. These two principles come down, very nearly, but not quite, to the exhortation "Buy good books." It is sometimes necessary, for some purpose or other, to buy a thoroughly bad book; but if one were to say that the first principle of book-collecting was to buy good books for their own sake, one would be pretty near the truth—near enough, in fact, to reflect considerable credit on the honourable pursuit of book-collecting.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME BOOKS OF REFERENCE

WHATEVER subject a book-collector may choose for his own, however obscure it may be, it is highly probable that someone else has previously given it at least a little attention, and that something, bearing more or less directly upon it, has been written and published. The collector's chief difficulty is often to find out what has already been published on his subject, and where ; and this difficulty is usually much increased when the publication has been, not in book form, but in the pages of a periodical. The purpose of the present chapter is not to describe all the specialised bibliographies that exist, but to mention a few of the more important bibliographical works of general, or at least fairly wide, scope, and to indicate, in short notes, the nature of their contents.

The books mentioned in this chapter have been selected because they seemed, between them, to cover a wide field of book-collecting in a general way. Many others might have been added, and the line between the included and the excluded has been difficult to trace—occasionally, I admit, it runs a little erratically, as when certain books of Caxtonian and Shakespearian bibliography have been included, though all other bibliographies of one author or one printer have been excluded. Generally speaking,

however, my method has been to choose those works which deal shortly with a longish period, or with a wide subject, and to leave out those which consider a smaller subject at greater length. Therefore I have left out bibliographies of single authors and printers (with the exceptions mentioned above), histories of printing in particular foreign countries, bibliographies of comparatively limited subjects such as sport, science, and the like. The assumption has been, I am afraid, that the collector who will consult this chapter will be interested in books primarily either as examples of the art of printing in Great Britain and America, or as the vehicles of imaginative literature in those countries. However, I hope that on these subjects, at least, enough books of reference are mentioned to put the reader in a position to proceed from them, if he so desires, to the use of the more specialised bibliographies.

Another class of bibliography, which has been omitted from my list, is that which consists of catalogues of particular libraries, whether public or private.

Before I pass on to the mention of particular books, there are certain warnings that must be given. One is that no bibliographer is infallible, and that errors and omissions occur in all bibliographies and other works of reference. Therefore the collector should receive all information offered him by the books he consults with an open mind; not, of course, lightly discrediting everything he is told, just because he finds some new fact that is not obviously reconcilable with what the accepted authorities say on a particular subject, but also not slavishly believ-

ing everything that he sees in print, just because it *is* in print. The other warning is that some periods, and some subjects, have had much more bibliographical attention than others, and that, in certain spheres of study, the collector will only have the most sketchy and imperfect works of reference to guide him.

Even of the brief selection of books of reference which is, in a moment or two, to follow, the ordinary collector will not want to possess all, or, perhaps, even the majority. There are many books mentioned in this chapter which I, for example, do not possess, and some which I have never had occasion to consult. But I hope that every book included is one the existence of which the collector should know of, and which he will, some day or other, probably need to consult.

With these preliminary remarks the following paragraphs, commenting upon some of the more important books of reference, are offered to the reader.

*The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature.* By William Thomas Lowndes. First edition, 4 volumes, 8vo, 1834. Second edition, edited by H. G. Bohn, 8vo., 5 volumes (10 parts) 1857-1864, with Appendix (vol: 6), 1864. Bohn's edition was re-issued, undated, in 1871.

Lowndes was born in 1798, and devoted fourteen years to the compilation of his *Manual*. He made no money out of it, and became a cataloguer to the bookseller, H. G. Bohn, who later edited the second edition of the *Manual*. Lowndes died in 1843. His book is the most important in the history of English Bibliography, since it was the first attempt



to catalogue the whole of English literature in one book. The arrangement is alphabetical under authors, and the book is, naturally, full of omissions (if that is not a bull) and not without mistakes. Nevertheless, no other work contains so vast a store of information, and the *Manual* has never been superseded. It is perhaps the only bibliographical work that is indispensable to every collector of English books printed before about the middle of the nineteenth century. The Appendix (vol. 6) to Bohn's edition contains lists of (*a*) the publications of clubs, societies, etc. : (*b*) books printed at private presses, and (*c*) of certain publishers' "libraries" and other series. No foreign books (with the exception of some American ones) are included in the *Manual*.

*A Critical Dictionary of English Literature, and British and American Authors, Living and Deceased, From the Earliest Accounts to the Middle of the Nineteenth Century.* By S. Austin Allibone. 8vo. 3 volumes. Philadelphia. 1859-1871. Two supplementary volumes by J. F. Kirk. Philadelphia. 1891.

Its title sufficiently describes this standard book of reference. The original three volumes contain about 46,000 notices of authors, with forty indexes of names of authors arranged by subject. The two supplementary volumes contain another 37,000 notices, but no indexes. The whole five volumes bring the period covered by the work down to the year 1888. The articles vary in length from a single line to several large octavo pages, printed in double column and small print. No other dictionary of English authors is on anything like so comprehensive a scale as Allibone's.



*Bibliotheca Britannica; or A General Index to British and Foreign Literature.* By Robert Watt, M.D. 4 volumes, 4to. Edinburgh. 1824.

Two volumes are arranged by authors, and two by subjects. To a large extent this book was rendered obsolete by Allibone (*q.v.*), but not entirely so. The two subject volumes, in particular, are still valuable.

*American Bibliography.* By Charles Evans. A Chronological Dictionary of all Books, Pamphlets and Periodical Publications printed in the United States of America from the Genesis of Printing in 1639 down to and including the year 1820. Volumes 1, etc., quarto. Chicago. Privately printed. 1903, *et seq.*

Nine volumes of this huge work have so far appeared; the last, covering the years 1793 and 1794, was issued in 1925. So far something over 28,000 books have been recorded. The entries are alphabetical within each year. Each volume has an index of authors, a subject index, and a list of printers and publishers, arranged by towns. It is interesting to note that whereas the last volume published contains the publications of only two years, the first volume contains those of ninety.

*Americana. The Literature of American History.* By Milton Waldman. 8vo. New York; Henry Holt & Co. London; Dulau & Co., 1925.

A general account of (*a*) the literature (especially the contemporary literature) relating to the discovery of America, and (*b*) the development of printing in America. Imaginative American literature is dealt with in a final chapter, which is too slight to be valuable; but the main part of the book is a most useful, informative, and readable survey, well suited

to the needs of the general collector or beginner. This book is not, and does not pretend to be, a bibliography of *Americana*.

*Manuel du Libraire et de l'Amateur de Livres.* Par Jacques-Charles Brunet. Fifth ed. 6 volumes. octavo, Paris—1860—65. Supplément. Par P. Deschamps et A. Brunet. 2 volumes. octavo, Paris, 1878—80.

First edition appeared in 1809. Of the much enlarged fifth edition the sixth volume is a subject index. The first five are arranged alphabetically by authors. Brunet did not aim at completeness, but at producing a Dictionary of “such ancient books as are at once rare and precious, and a large number of modern works, which, by their well-recognised merit, their singularity, the beauty of their printing, the engravings with which they are embellished, or by other remarkable characteristics, have some claim to be classed as precious.” Brunet worked specially from the French point of view, and his book is most valuable for books produced in France and the other Neo-Latin countries, though books of other countries are not excluded. His *Manual* is much more fully annotated than (for instance) Lowndes, but, like Lowndes, he gives monetary values which are now only of historical interest. The Supplement is compiled on the same principles as the main work.

*A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475—1640.* Compiled by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1926. [Issued to Members of the Society. Some copies are available to the public through the agency of Messrs. Quaritch.]

This is by far the most important of recent biblio-

graphical works, and eventually will probably rank, with Lowndes's *Bibliographer's Manual*, as one of the two greatest achievements of English bibliography. Some 150 libraries were searched for material for this catalogue, which contains more than 26,000 entries. Each entry refers to a separate edition, or issue, of a book, and gives a shortened form of the title, size (quarto, etc.), place of printing, printer's name, date, location of a limited number of copies in England and America, and sometimes other information. The entries are arranged alphabetically under author's names, or (failing these) other suitable headings. This catalogue is not a census of existing copies, and the aim of the compilers has usually been to indicate the whereabouts of only five copies—three in Great Britain and two in America. Nor does the catalogue make any reference to books which are known to have been printed, but of which no copy has been traced. The book is printed in double columns, and the entries are as short as possible, seldom exceeding four lines. Previous catalogues of English books printed up to 1640 were that of the British Museum, 3 volumes, issued in 1884, and Charles Sayle's catalogue of those in the Cambridge University Library (4 volumes, 1900–1907).

*Notes on Bibliographical Evidence for Literary Students and Editors of English Works of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* By R. B. McKerrow. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1914. [Out of print. But an expanded edition is in preparation which is to be published by the Oxford University Press.]

Gives a great deal of clearly stated, and logically arranged, information as to the technique of printing

and book-production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ; also as to errors which are likely to arise, and their significance. Everyone who takes bibliography seriously should know this book, which is immensely useful in assisting the collector to understand the "whys and wherefors" of any unusually constructed book which he may possess.

*The Uses of Libraries.* Edited by Ernest H. Baker, D. Lit. 8vo. University of London Press. 1927.

Twelve chapters, originally delivered as lectures, by various authors. The objects of the book are (a) to explain to the student how best to make use of a library, and (b) to summarise the library resources of Great Britain and (more briefly) foreign countries. Information is given as to the various libraries that are available for the use of students, and of what specialised collections they contain. The authors are all recognised authorities on their subjects, and the book forms a guide which should be of great assistance to any book-collector, or other student, who is anxious to discover what library, or libraries, it would be most to his advantage to consult on any particular point. Two chapters are given to describing the resources of the British Museum, and one to those of the Record Office ; other libraries are grouped under such headings as "University Libraries," "Collections of Manuscripts" and "Scientific and Technical Libraries."

*The Book Collector's Guide.* A Practical Handbook of British and American Bibliography. By Seymour de Ricci. Philadelphia and New York ; The Rosenbach Company. 8vo. 1921. [[Eleven hundred copies issued.]

Brief notes, with records of monetary values on "the two or three thousand British and American books which fashion has decided are the most desirable for the up-to-date collector." References are given to fuller bibliographies of many of the more important authors included in this book, and these form one of its most useful features. Even the six years that have elapsed since the publication of this book have rendered the values given to the various books quite out of date ; moreover, they were, even when first they were given, the prices of New York rather than those of any other city.

*Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature.* By Samuel Halkett and John Laing. New and enlarged edition by J. Kennedy, W. A. Smith and A. F. Johnson, 8vo, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London, 1926 *et seq.* [To be complete in seven or eight volumes, of which, at the time of writing, two have appeared.]

The first edition of this, the most important book of its kind, appeared in 1882-8 in four volumes. A dictionary of this sort is bound, from its very nature, to be incomplete, and must not be expected to answer every question put to it ; but Halkett and Laing is a book with which every book-collector should be acquainted.

*Repertorium Bibliographicum.* By Ludwig Hain. Two volumes (4 parts). 8vo. Stuttgart and Paris. 1826-1838.

This is the first great work on *Incunabula*, and, with the three volume supplement compiled by Mr. W. A. Copping and published in 1895-1898-1902 by Messrs. Sotheran, is an essential work of reference for those who study fifteenth-century printing. Hain's own work does not, naturally,



conform entirely to modern bibliographical ideas, but when he has seen a book himself he is accurate, and he marks with an asterisk those books he has examined personally.

*Gesamtkatalog Der Wiegendrucke.* Leipzig, 1925 *et seq.* [To be complete in twelve annual volumes, of which two have, at the time of writing, appeared. Messrs. Quaritch are the British agents.]

An alphabetical catalogue of all known *Incunabula* (books printed up to 1500), compiled by a Commission appointed (in 1904) by the Prussian Board of Education. The present editor is Professor Erich von Rath. Full descriptions of, and notes on, every item are given, together with the location of all copies of books of which only ten, or fewer, copies are known. Of other books the locations of a few representative copies only are given. In all something like 38,000 separate books will be described in this catalogue. The two concluding volumes are to consist of a series of indexes.

*Fifteenth Century English Books, a Bibliography of Books and Documents printed in England and of Books for the English Market printed abroad.* By E. Gordon Duff. London; Bibliographical Society, 4to. 1917. [Issued to Members of the Society.]

Contains descriptions of the 431 known books, or fragments of books, with lists of the libraries, public and private, in which copies are to be found. This work is therefore both a bibliography and (except for the Caxtons, of which a census had already been made by Mr. de Ricci) a census of copies. There is a typographical index. This was the first bibliography to receive a grant from the British Government towards the expenses of publication.



*Typographical Antiquities ; Or the History of Printing in England, Scotland, and Ireland, begun by Joseph Ames, augmented by William Herbert, and now greatly enlarged . . . by Thomas Frognal Dibdin.* Four volumes. quarto. 1810-1819.

A work very valuable to the collector of English books of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The first edition of this book was by Joseph Ames (1689-1759) and appeared, in one volume, quarto, in 1749. William Herbert (1718-1795) issued a much enlarged second edition, in three volumes, quarto, in the years 1785, 1786 and 1790.

*A Census of Caxtons.* By Seymour de Ricci. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1909. [Issued to Members of the Society.]

Short collations of each book are given, with all that is known of the past history and present location of every traceable copy, or fragment of a copy. There is an index of libraries which contain, or have contained, Caxtons.

*A Century of the English Book-Trade, 1457-1557.* By E. Gordon Duff. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1905.

*A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1557-1640.* [Compiled by various hands, and] edited by R. B. McKerrow. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1910.

*A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland, 1641 to 1667.* By H. R. Plomer. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1908.

*A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland, and Ireland from 1668 to 1725.* Compiled by H. R. Plomer and others. Edited by Arundell Esdaile. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1922.  
[Issued to Members of the Society.]

This fine series of books includes short biographical notices of every known printer and book-

seller for the period covered. A further volume, for the period from 1726 to 1775, or thereabouts, is, it is said, in preparation.

*Mr. William Shakespeare : Original and Early Editions of his Quartos and Folios, his Source Books and those containing Contemporary Notices.* By Henrietta C. Bartlett. 8vo. New Haven ; Yale University Press. London ; Oxford University Press. 1922.

This book is described by its author as "an attempt to bring together, in compact form, all the more important printed sources before 1640, from which we derive our knowledge of" Shakespeare and his works. This bibliography is divided into four parts :—editions, up to 1709, of Shakespeare's own works ; spurious works, and adaptations down to Garrick's *Florizel and Perdita* of 1762 ; source books ("books which Shakespeare may have read or to which he refers") ; books, up to 1623, containing references to Shakespeare or his works, together with some later seventeenth century references. Some selection was necessary in the compilation of the third and fourth sections. Collations of all the books included are given, with an account of the distribution of copies of the rarer ones ; and, moreover, some description of the contents, and importance, of each book is added, so that Miss Bartlett's book is equally valuable to the mere collector and to the literary or biographical student.

*Shakespeare Bibliography : A Dictionary of every known Issue of the Writings of our National Poet and of recorded opinion thereon in the English Language.* By William Jaggard. 8vo. Stratford-on-Avon : Shakespeare Press, 1911.

This volume consists of more than 700 pages,

printed in double column and smallish print, and contains a great deal of information which cannot be got elsewhere. There are bibliographical notes to some of the more important entries, but usually the entries are kept as short as possible. In most cases the location of a copy, or copies, is given.

*A Census of Shakespeare's Plays in Quarto, 1594-1709.* By Henrietta C. Bartlett and Alfred W. Pollard. 4to. New Haven : Yale University Press. London : Oxford University Press. 1916.

This volume gives information as to the whereabouts of all traceable copies of Shakespearean quartos. In addition, some account of the known history and of the condition, etc., of each copy is given. There are full transcriptions of the title-pages, and short collations, of all the books referred to.

*Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies . . . A Census of Extant Copies [of the First Folio of 1623].* By Sir Sidney Lee. Folio. Oxford University Press. 1902.

The author divides his census into lists of perfect copies, imperfect copies, fragments, and unclassified copies. There are also subdivisions. Within each subdivision the arrangement is geographical, *i.e.*, by present location. A description of the condition, etc., of each copy is given, and of its history so far as that is known. Sir Sidney Lee published a pamphlet of "Notes and Additions" to this work in 1906.

*A List of English Plays, Written before 1643, and Printed before 1700.* By W. W. Greg. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1900.

*A List of Masques, Pageants, etc.*, supplementary to *A List of English Plays*. By W. W. Greg. 4to. Bibliographical Society.

1902. [These two volumes issued to Members of the Society, which later cased the two lists together to form one volume.]

These two volumes "together supply a survey of the whole of the English dramatic literature previous to the Civil War, which has come down to us in prints of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." Locations of copies are given. Certain late editions of small importance are omitted. The arrangement of each volume is alphabetical. The *Masques* also contains a tabulation of the contents of four catalogues of English plays, issued in the seventeenth century by Rogers and Ley, Archer, and (two lists) Kirkman.

*The Term Catalogues, 1668-1709 A.D.; with a Number for Easter Term, 1711 A.D.* Edited . . . By Edward Arber. 4to. Three volumes, 1903-1906. [Privately printed for the editor. Copies are not difficult to obtain in the second-hand bookshops.]

Reprints of *Mercurius Librarius*, and subsequent quarterly periodicals, which consisted of lists of books issued, in each of the four terms of the year, by the booksellers of London. The originals are very rare, and Arber's edition is therefore of great use to collectors of Restoration books, especially as its three volumes are properly indexed.

*A List of English Tales and Prose Romances printed before 1740.* By Arundell Esdaile. 4to. Bibliographical Society. 1912. [Issued to Members of the Society.]

This book is divided into two parts, containing respectively books which first appeared before, or during, the year 1642 (the outbreak of the Civil War), and those of which the first edition was printed later than that year. Within each section

the arrangement is alphabetical. This forms a complete catalogue of English prose fiction before Richardson's *Pamela*. Many of the entries, but not all, include the name of a library in which the book may be seen.

*Bibliography of English Language and Literature.* Compiled by Members of the Modern Humanities Research Association. 8vo. Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1921 (for 1920) and subsequent years.

This annual publication, though written from the point of view of the literary student, is naturally useful to the bibliographer and book-collector also. It records under subjects the chief publications, dealing with the English language and literature, issued in all parts of the world, during a given year. Important contributions to periodicals are included.

*The Ashley Library: A Catalogue of Printed Books, Manuscripts and Autograph Letters collected by Thomas James Wise.* Eight volumes. 4to. Printed for private circulation, 1922-1926.

I break my rule of including no catalogues of particular libraries in this list of books, by the inclusion of Mr. Wise's great catalogue, which is, in detail, and in scope, a remarkable proof of what one man may do in a lifetime devoted to books. Unlike some famous collectors, Mr. Wise has really done his work himself, and has been the collector, librarian, and cataloguer of his own library. His catalogue is likely long to remain a standard work of reference for the descriptions it gives of many of the rarest books in many different periods of English literature, especially poetic and dramatic.



## RECORDS OF AUCTION SALES

In Great Britain two publications are at present issued which deal with the prices which are paid for books at auction. Of these one is *Book Prices Current*, which has been appearing since 1887, and which issues a single yearly volume covering, in one alphabetical arrangement, the important auction sales of a year. The publishers of *Book Prices Current* are Messrs. Elliot Stock. The second of these books of reference is *Book-Auction Records*, which was first published in 1903 by the late Frank Carslake, and is now issued by Messrs. Henry Stevens, Son and Stiles. Four parts are issued in a year, each of them complete in itself and covering, not a section of the alphabet, but a section of the year. Both *Book Prices Current* and *Book Auction Records* are devoted chiefly to sales in London and a few big British provincial cities; a few records from American sales are, however, also recorded. For fuller records of American auctions the *American Book Prices Current* (New York, 1895 onwards) should be consulted. To the British collector it is of the greatest assistance to possess at least a few volumes of either *Book Prices Current* or *Book Auction Records*. Books sold in lots, or books which fetch only trivial prices, are not, of course, recorded in either publication.

## BOOKSELLERS' CATALOGUES

The list of the catalogues issued from time to time by important firms of booksellers form valuable additions to the collector's library, though they suffer



from the limitations imposed upon them by the extent of their publishers' stocks at the time of issue. A few have become standard works of reference. The earliest of these is, perhaps, the *Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica* published in 1815 by Longmans. As its title indicates this volume, which runs to some 490 pages, describes a collection of books of English poetry, especially of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Bernard Quaritch's *General Catalogue of Books* (seven volumes, 1887-1892) together with ten supplements, 1889-1897) is another Catalogue of the first importance, and—it is, perhaps, hardly necessary to add—was issued by the greatest of all English booksellers. The specialised lists issued from time to time by such important firms as Messrs. Quaritch, Maggs, Pickering and Chatto, Dobell, Sotheran and others are often worth possessing. I may perhaps—greatly daring—mention, as recent examples of notable catalogues, Messrs. Quaritch's Bookbindings, Messrs. Maggs' Aeronautical Books, Messrs. Sotheran's Scientific Books, Messrs. Dobell's Restoration Poetry and Drama, and Messrs. Pickering and Chatto's alphabetical list (running through a series of catalogues) of English literature, including a great deal of eighteenth century poetry of which it is not elsewhere easy to find descriptions. These lists are mentioned from memory, almost haphazard, and many more might, no doubt, be added to them.

#### WORKS OF GENERAL REFERENCE

Finally, it may be well to remind the collector that every book of reference is to some extent useful to

the bibliographer. Particularly is this true of biographical dictionaries, for the notices of the lives of authors inevitably contain at least the shadows of bibliographies. Many of the bibliographies in the *Dictionary of National Biography* are extremely carefully compiled, though, naturally enough, they make no references to difference of issue and other fine bibliographical points. The *D. N. B.*, indeed, is one of the most useful books which the collector of English books can possibly possess. The *Cambridge History of English Literature*, also, has useful (though generally incomplete) bibliographies at the end of each volume ; and these are shortly, I believe, to be re-issued separately, in a revised and amplified form.

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